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A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

BY

LUCIUS R. FAIGE.

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VOLUME III.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Search the Scriptures.—JOHN v. 39.

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# INTRODUCTION

## TO THE

### ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

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THE *authorship* of this Book has been uniformly ascribed to Luke, the Evangelist, and its genuineness and canonical authority have been acknowledged, in all ages, by the Christian Church. The testimony of Eusebius, in the fourth century, is a fair specimen of the opinion expressed by the fathers : "Luke, who was born at Antioch, and by profession a physician, being for the most part connected with Paul, and familiarly acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us, in two inspired books, the institutes of that spiritual healing art which he obtained from them. One of these is his Gospel, in which he testifies that he has recorded 'as those who were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word' delivered to him ; whom also, he says, he has in all things followed. The other is his Acts of the Apostles, which he composed, not from what he had heard from others, but from what he had seen himself." Book III. chap. 4. Compare Luke i. 3, with Acts i. 1.

Concerning the *date*, there is very little difference of opinion. The history extends to the close of Paul's second year of imprisonment, supposed to be A.D. 63 ; and it does not relate his death, which is said to have occurred about A.D. 65. Between these two dates, the history was probably written. For similar reasons, it is supposed to have been written at Rome ; for the writer mentions his arrival, with Paul, at that city, but gives no intimation of a subsequent departure.

Although the *title* was not probably affixed by Luke himself, or by divine authority, it is of very ancient date, and is manifestly appropriate. The Book contains a history of the Acts or the Transactions of the Apostles, for a period of about thirty years next after the resurrection and ascension of our blessed Lord.

Three principal subjects are embraced in this history. (1.) The conversion of disciples and the firm establishment of the church among the Jews ; chap. i.—ix : (2.) The conversion of Gentiles, who already feared and worshipped the true God ; chap. x.—xii. : (3.) The conversion of Gentiles, who previously neither knew nor feared the true God, and who did not subsequently become subject to the law of Moses ; chap. xiii.—xxviii.

The first named of these subjects is treated with comparative brevity, because the fact had been previously demonstrated that the Jews should partake the blessings of the Messiah's reign. It was only necessary, therefore, that the historian should relate the fulfilment of the promise concerning the effusion of the divine Spirit, and the remarkable results which ensued. In regard to the other two subjects, kindred in their character, the historian is much more particular and minute in his narration. To the Jews, it was scarcely less incredible that the Gentiles were to be admitted to a perfect equality with themselves, in regard to the divine favor and blessings, than it was that the authority of Moses could be superseded by that of a more illustrious prophet. Hence the propriety of relating, more at large, those events which conclusively and unequivocally manifested the divine purpose, that our Lord Jesus Christ should become literally and truly "the Saviour of the world," by imparting spiritual life to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. This doctrine was offensive even to the Jewish Christians: to the unconverted Jews, it was an utter abomination. But, though they destroyed the life of Paul, the most prominent advocate of this truth, even as their fathers had destroyed his Master, the truth lived and triumphed. Paul himself, at the close of life, when reviewing his laborious struggle against the power of the adversary, was cheered by the conviction that his labor had not been in vain. God had crowned his exertions with success, and had given him abundant and precious seals of his ministry. And although the disciples still endured persecution, he knew the time was rapidly approaching, when the persecuting power should be paralysed, and the churches should have peace.

The remarkable manner in which an "exceedingly mad" persecutor of Christians was transformed into their most devoted and successful defender, the many miraculous interpositions of divine power in behalf of him and his fellow-laborers, and other events which were subservient to the great object embraced in the propagation of Christianity throughout the whole world, will be more particularly noticed elsewhere.

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

## CHAPTER I.

**T**HE former treatise have I made,  
O Theophilus, of all that Jesus  
began both to do and teach.

## CHAPTER I.

1. *The former treatise, &c.* Literally *word*; but, according to common usage, a discourse or narrative, whether spoken or written. The reference is manifestly to the Gospel according to Luke; which was composed by the same author, addressed particularly to the same person, and devoted to the same general subject, as this second part, or continuation, of the narrative. ¶ *Theophilus.* Very little is known concerning this individual. He was probably a believer in Christianity; and, from the manner in which he is elsewhere addressed, it is not unlikely that he held some office of civil trust and power. See note on Luke i. 3. ¶ *Of all.* Rather, concerning all. Luke does not profess to have related, in his former treatise, every act and word of his divine Master. He frequently referred to discourses, without recording the language; see Luke iv. 15, 31; v. 3, 17; vi. 6; xix. 47; xx. 1; and John, by a common Eastern hyperbole, assures us that all the acts and language of our Lord could not be compressed into so small a space. John xx. 25. The meaning evidently is, that the former treatise was concerning the ministry of Jesus, from his birth until his ascension to his Father; that it contained an abstract of his teaching and of his mighty works; and that it embraced evidence sufficient to demonstrate his Messiahship. ¶ *Began both to do and teach.* This phrase has been interpreted thus: "In the former treatise, I discoursed of all those things which Jesus himself began to do and to teach: in this, I am to give a relation of those things which were continued by his

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

apostles after him."—*Lightfoot.* But I prefer the more common interpretation; namely, that the phrase is a common Hebraism, equivalent to *did and taught.* Thus it is written, that Jesus "called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth." Mark vi. 7. Another evangelist expresses the same idea thus: "These twelve Jesus sent forth." Matt. x. 5. So also, "Some began to spit on him." Mark xiv. 65. The same act is described in the parallel place by an equivalent term, "Then did they spit in his face." Matt. xxvi. 67. This form of speech is often used by Luke. "Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age;" that is, he was about thirty years of age. Luke iii. 23. "Then shall they begin to say;" that is, then they shall say. Luke xxiii. 30. "He began to speak boldly;" that is, he spake boldly. Acts xviii. 26. "Tertullus began to accuse him;" that is, Tertullus accused him. Acts xxiv. 2. ¶ *To do and teach.* The former treatise embraced an account both of those works which no man could do except God were with him, and of those doctrines which fell from the lips of him who spake as none other ever spake. John iii. 2; vii. 46. The truth of Christianity, and the divine commission of its founder, had thus been sufficiently demonstrated. The reference to the preceding work forms a proper and very natural introduction to the second part of the same general design; in which is related the labors of those servants whom Jesus elected to speak in his name after his departure.

2. *Until the day, &c.* Our Lord continued to teach the truths of the kingdom, and to confirm his doctrines by miracles, as well after his resurrection

### 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many

as before his crucifixion, even until the day when he was parted from his disciples, and carried up into heaven. Luke xxiv. 51. To this point of time the former narrative extended, and at this point the present narrative commences. After a more full relation of the events attending the ascension, than had been given in the gospel, the proper history of the apostolical labors and successes begins at ver. 15 of this chapter.

¶ *He was taken up.* Evidently referring to the ascension of our Lord. The form of expression, here used, denotes that his translation from earth to heaven was effected by the same divine power which had enabled him previously to perform miracles; namely, the power of his Father and his God.

¶ *Through the Holy Ghost.* That is, the Holy Spirit, or the spirit or energy of God. Different writers have assigned different places to these words, in their construction of the sentence; some, joining them with "was taken," implying that our Lord was taken up into heaven by the divine energy; some with "had chosen," implying that he selected his apostles under the guidance of divine wisdom; but the more common and apparently the more natural construction is that adopted in the common translation, implying that, when our Lord gave commandments to his disciples, he spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. This well agrees with his uniform declaration, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me," and "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." John vi. 38; vii. 16. In all which he "began both to do and teach," he professed to act under the divine direction and by divine assistance.

¶ *Had given commandments.* Literally, having commanded. Some have supposed particular, if not exclusive, reference is here made to the very important command that the apostles should go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, which was his final injunction as he was about to ascend. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15. But I see no necessity for limiting the meaning to the last commandment, or even to those delivered after the resurrection of our Lord. From the commencement of his ministry, he taught and commanded in his Father's name,

and in a spirit of divine wisdom and truth. Before his crucifixion as well as after his resurrection, he gave commandments through the Holy Spirit; and there seems to be no impropriety in giving this general application to the phrase here used. ¶ *The apostles.* The twelve disciples whom he selected as his special ministers, and who were styled *apostles* because they were *sent forth* in his name, to proclaim the advent of the kingdom of heaven, and to perform wonderful works according to its spirit. See note on Matt. x. 2. Of the original number, eleven remained, one having miserably fallen. ¶ *He had chosen.* See Matt. x. 1—8; Luke vi. 12—16.

3. *To whom also he showed himself alive.* As it was of the utmost importance to the establishment of Christianity that the resurrection of its founder should be distinctly proved, and as the apostles were selected as the principal witnesses of this fact, our Lord appeared to them repeatedly, under such circumstances that they could have no possible doubt that he had truly risen. For an account of these various appearances, see note at the end of John. ¶ *After his passion.* That is, after his death. The word *passion* is now ordinarily used to denote anger, or some other violent excitement of the mind. Thus of an angry man, we say he is in a passion; or of one who is prone to sudden outbursts of anger, he is a passionate man. Sometimes also the word is applied to the emotions produced by love or hope, or despondency. But originally it had the signification of suffering or endurance. The kindred word, *patient*, retains its original meaning, when applied to a sick person, that is, one who *suffers* from disease. In this place, as in Luke xxii. 15; xxiv. 26, 46; Acts iii. 18; xvii. 3, where the same word occurs in the original and is rendered *suffer*, it not only indicates suffering in general, but is technically applied to the death of Christ in particular. The meaning is, Jesus, having suffered death on the cross, afterwards showed himself to his disciples, and convinced them beyond doubt that he was again alive. ¶ *By many infallible proofs.* Proofs which could not deceive. His disciples not only had frequent opportunity to see him during the space

infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God :

of "forty days," and to hear him discourse on familiar topics, as here indicated by the historian, but they also handled him, and he ate and drank with them. Luke xxiv. 39—43; John x. 27; xxi. 9—13. Indeed the state of their minds was such, that nothing short of infallible proofs would have sufficed to convince them that he who had been dead was again alive. It was an event which they did not expect; because, through a misapprehension of his true character, their faith in him as the Messiah was absolutely crushed by his death; and when they heard that he had risen, the account appeared so improbable, that it was rejected as an idle tale. Yet, that they were finally convinced and made certain of his resurrection, their subsequent conduct affords undeniable testimony. Neither hope, nor fear, nor persecution, nor the pain of death itself, could induce them to waver for one moment in their attestation of this glorious truth; and most of their number sealed their testimony with blood. If any faith may be placed in human testimony, the apostles were not themselves deceived, and they did not deceive others. See this argument more fully stated in the note at the end of Matthew. ¶ *Being seen of them forty days.* It does not appear that Jesus was constantly with his disciples during this period of time; but he occasionally associated and conversed with them, and did not wholly absent himself from them by ascending to his Father, until forty days after his resurrection. They had abundant time and opportunity for reflection, and for satisfying every doubt which may have arisen in regard to the reality of his appearance. The following remark may be somewhat fanciful, yet perhaps not altogether so: "Forty years after this, a year for a day, was Jerusalem destroyed, and the nation of the Jews rooted out; because they would not believe in Christ, who had so mightily declared himself to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, and who had so plainly declared his resurrection from the dead by so many appearances and infallible proofs for forty days. And, that the sin might be fully

4 And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jeru-

legible in the judgment, they were besieged and closed up in Jerusalem, at a Passover; as, at a Passover, they had slain and crucified the Lord of life." *Lightfoot.* ¶ *Speaking of the things, &c.* His conversation, after as well as before his crucifixion and resurrection, was chiefly devoted to the great object of his mission. To his former instructions he added yet more, that his disciples might be the better prepared to preach the gospel to all nations, and turn their fellow-men from darkness to light, and from the service of sin to the service of God. This fact may be regarded as one of the *infallible proofs* of his identity. Jesus spake as none other ever spake; and no impostor could have counterfeited the matter and manner of his conversation so successfully as to deceive those who had been so intimately associated with him for many months. If they had not fully understood his instructions, and if they did not even then fully understand, they must certainly have been able to distinguish between the voice of a stranger and the true shepherd; and no impostor could have deceived them. ¶ *Kingdom of God.* See note on Matt. iii. 2.

4. *Being assembled together with them.* The peculiar form of this phrase has occasioned some perplexity to commentators. Some have suggested that this meeting was in Galilee, whither Jesus commanded his disciples to repair, promising to meet them; and that they were all thus assembled together, agreeably to appointment. Others have preferred to render the participle actively, and drop the preposition, translating the phrase thus, "having assembled them together." It would seem from the context that this meeting was in Jerusalem, not in Galilee; and it does not elsewhere appear that Jesus had commanded his disciples to assemble at this particular time and place. The only important fact, however, is sufficiently manifest; namely, that Jesus and his disciples were all together, whether by previous appointment or not, and that he instructed them. ¶ *Should not depart from Jerusalem, &c.* See note on Luke xxiv. 49. Our Lord did not choose that his apostles should

saalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saieth he*, ye have heard of me.

commence the work of their ministry, until they were fully prepared; nor would he have them disperse, and commence preaching, each by himself, at a distance from Jerusalem, as suspicions might be excited if they first proclaimed the resurrection of their Master at a distance from the place where it was alleged to have occurred. But here, where he had been unjustly condemned, mocked, buffeted, and ignominiously crucified between two thieves; here, where his enemies were now triumphing and exulting in the hope that they had utterly crushed him and his cause; here, where an immense concourse of people from distant regions could witness the marvels consequent on the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, enabling them to speak with various tongues, or in divers languages; here, where the best possible opportunity and means existed for detection of imposture, had any been attempted; here, in Jerusalem, he would have them remain, until they were empowered by the Spirit to give a convincing and overwhelming testimony to the truth; and here, in the midst of his powerful enemies, would he have them first proclaim his resurrection, that the power of God might openly triumph over human power.

¶ *Wait for the promise, &c.* That is, for the fulfilment of the promise, which Jesus had made in his Father's name; namely, that the Father would send or impart unto them the Holy Spirit, who should teach them all things and bring all his own instructions to their remembrance. John xiv. 26. See also John xv. 26; xvi. 7—15. This promise was shortly afterwards fulfilled; and some of the outward and marvellous manifestations of it are detailed in the succeeding chapter.

5. *John truly baptized with water, &c.* The reference is evidently to the language of John the Baptist, Matt. iii. 11. ¶ *Baptized with the Holy Ghost.* Concerning the meaning of this phrase, in its general sense, see note on Matt. iii. 11. In this place, it seems to be used in a peculiar sense, indicating certain gifts which should speedily be imparted to the apostles, which are not imparted

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

to all believers. These were, chiefly, the ability to perform miracles, to speak in languages which they had never learned, and both to remember all the instructions of their Master, and to receive from on high, and impart to mankind, additional communications of truth. That the phrase was used, not in its general but in this peculiar sense, is evident, because the purifying process, indicated by baptism with the Holy Ghost, in its general sense, was not accomplished in the apostles at the time implied in the phrase, "not many days hence." Much of moral imperfection cleaved to them long afterwards; and near the close of life, the survivor of them all testified, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John i. 8. Nor can it be said that such a purifying process *commenced* at that period; for it had commenced long before. It is not for one moment to be believed that they had so long enjoyed the personal instructions and admonitions and faultless example of their Master, without any moral improvement. Whatever may have been true in regard to the traitor, it will not be denied that the eleven faithful apostles had been, partially at least, turned away from their iniquities. And, as matter of fact, we cannot perceive, in the history, any indication of a surprising moral change wrought in the apostles by this baptism on the day of Pentecost. Except that their former timidity was succeeded by unshrinking boldness (which may be accounted for by their certainty that Jesus had risen and ascended), they seem to have been in a similar condition, as men, after as before the outpouring of the Spirit. But, as apostles, a visible and marvellous change was wrought in them. They were forthwith enabled to speak foreign languages intelligibly, to heal the sick, and to perform many wonders and signs. Acts ii. 4, 43; iii. 1—9. They doubtless shared the moral or spiritual purification resulting from baptism with the Holy Ghost, in common with all who are thus baptized; but there seems no reference to this subject here. A different operation and



6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?

manifestation of the Spirit, peculiar to the apostles and sundry chosen associates in the first age of the church, is clearly indicated. ¶ *Not many days hence.* Generally supposed to be not more than ten or twelve. The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

6. *When they therefore were come together.* This would seem to be not the same meeting mentioned in ver. 4, 5 : that was probably in Jerusalem, but this on the mount of Olives. Perhaps, however, it was a continuation of the same meeting, the place having been changed. Luke tells us that Jesus conversed with his disciples in Jerusalem, admonishing them to abide in that city until they should "be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke xxiv. 49-51. The natural import of this passage is, that Jesus led the disciples to Bethany, and ascended in their sight, immediately after commanding them to await the fulfilment of the promise in Jerusalem. If so, then we may understand the phrase here used to be equivalent to *while they continued together*, though they had evidently passed from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, ver. 12, on the slope of which mount the village of Bethany was situated. See note on Matt. xxi. 1. However this be, the disciples were now evidently enjoying their last interview on earth with their Master; for "while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight;" ver. 9. ¶ *They asked, &c.* It is singular that the only question which they are recorded to have proposed, on this occasion, should furnish evidence that they still continued to expect an earthly kingdom, and to anticipate its honors and glory. This fact is important, because it shows the improbability of their being deceived in regard to the ascension. This, as well as many previous events, was contrary to their expectations. They did not believe Jesus would die, because they expected the Messiah would reign on earth for ever, as an earthly prince. They did not believe

he would rise from the dead, because their confidence in him, as the Messiah, was destroyed. They did not now expect he would ascend from the earth, because their faith in him was renewed, and their expectation of an earthly kingdom was revived. Nothing short of ocular demonstration would suffice to convince them that he had taken his final departure from the earth; and they were not likely to be deceived in this matter. ¶ *Wilt thou at this time restore again, &c.* "That temporal dominion over all other nations which the Jews then expected being never before granted to them, the word here cannot well be rendered *restore*, but rather *grant*, or *establish*. Ingenious here is the conceit of Dr. Lightfoot, that the reason of the question, *Wilt thou do it at this time?* arose from their reflection on the indignities the Jews had done to Christ," &c.—*Whitby*. The conceit, here referred to, is thus expressed: "It is very apparent, that the apostles had the same fanciful conceptions about the earthly reign of Christ with the rest of that nation; but yet they seem here a little to doubt and hesitate, either as to the thing itself, or at least as to the time; and that, not without cause, considering some things which had so lately fallen out. 'Lord, wilt thou restore the kingdom to those that have dealt so basely and perfidiously with thee? What! to this generation, that lies under the actual guilt of thy bloodshed? Or, indeed, to this nation at all, which, by the perpetration of the late wickedness, had made itself unworthy of so great a kindness?'"—*Lightfoot*. The ingenuity of this conceit may be admitted; yet its soundness may well be questioned. It never entered the thoughts of the disciples, that those Jews who had persecuted Jesus were to be advanced to posts of honor in the expected kingdom; but they were to be punished severely for their misconduct. The twelve thrones and the authority to judge the twelve tribes of Israel had been promised to the apostles; and to the fulfilment of this promise they looked forward with some degree of impatience. It is inconsistent with the uniform character of their language on this subject to suppose they intended

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.

here to dissuade our Lord from an immediate establishment of this earthly kingdom. They intimated their disappointment that he had not done it, even after the Jews had filled the cup of their iniquity, Luke xxiv. 21; and nothing had since occurred to lead them to desire further delay. On the contrary, their hopes were highly excited by the resurrection of Jesus; and they could not repress the inquiry whether he would now establish his kingdom, punish his enemies, and grant a suitable recompense to his faithful followers. They seem to have had no doubt that such a kingdom would be established. All the instructions of their Master, his distinct affirmation that his kingdom was not of this world, and his repeated declaration that he should soon return to his Father, to dwell no more bodily on the earth,—all this availed nothing to eradicate their hopes of an earthly kingdom, or dispel their fond dreams of its splendor and glory. Their only doubt was, whether the time for its establishment had come; shall it be *at this time*? This was the point of their inquiry. And the inquiry exhibits both the inveteracy of their prejudice, and their impatience of any further delay in the consummation of their hopes. It may be added, that this is the last instance in which they manifested any expectation of an earthly kingdom. Within a few days, the Spirit was poured out upon them, and they were enabled not only to remember the language of their Lord, John xiv. 26, but to understand its true spiritual import. They then understood that his was a spiritual kingdom, for the full establishment of which in the hearts of men they were ready to devote their utmost exertions, and even their lives.

7. *It is not for you to know, &c.* Our Lord did not choose to correct their mistake, as to the character of the kingdom: he had previously spoken with sufficient plainness. He preferred now to pursue the same course as on another occasion, recorded by Matthew, chap. xxiv. He admonished them that they might not expect to know the par-

8 But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and

ticulars of God's designs. It was sufficient that he had revealed his purpose; they need not inquire too curiously concerning the precise time when all should be accomplished. Even he himself did not profess to know the day and hour when the old world or dispensation should cease, and the new world commence, or the kingdom of heaven be established. See Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32. And if this was not made known to the Son, his disciples might well content themselves without learning precisely *when* the prediction should be fulfilled. ¶ *The times or the seasons.* This phrase may be regarded as equivalent to the *day* and *hour* mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 36; times and day denoting a longer period, and seasons and hour, a shorter. The meaning is, that future events, whether near or remote, whether a long or a short time be required for their accomplishment, are known with exactness by God only. If he reveal the fact, it is in general terms, not in detail. ¶ *In his own power.* Or, authority. The future is entirely within the control of divine authority. We may confidently expect the fulfilment of the Father's promises; for he cannot lie. But we need not concern ourselves as to the precise time when any promised event shall be accomplished, unless it is definitely revealed. For example, the disciples were assured that, during the lifetime of some of their number, the kingdom of God should be established, and men rewarded according to their works. So far as the promise had respect to the duration of human life, it was definite; but the precise day and hour were not specified; and when the disciples inquired concerning these, their curiosity was checked by the assurance that such exact information had not been communicated to their Master himself. It is not well to push our inquiries beyond the word of revelation. We may better be content with the general assurances given us, and believe that God will bestow the promised blessings at the best time, and in the best manner.

8. *Ye shall receive, &c.* Literally ye shall receive the power of the Holy

in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Ghost coming upon you. The meaning is similar to that expressed in the assurance to the disciples, Luke xxiv. 49, that they should "be endued with power from on high." The power of the Holy Ghost, or from on high, or the power communicated by the Spirit, was manifested immediately in the apostles. They had power to speak with tongues, to heal the sick, and to perform many wonders and signs. They had power to remember the instructions of their Master, and to proclaim his resurrection and his gospel in a manner which none could gainsay or resist. Such was the divine power manifested in their words and actions, that their adversaries quailed before them, and thousands were converted in a day. ¶ *Ye shall be witnesses, &c.* The original word here used is *martyres* (μαρτυρες), or, in its English form, *martyrs*. It is applied to those who sacrificed their lives in attestation of the truth, as in Acts xxii. 20. But this is only a technical use of the word. Its original and general signification is properly expressed by the word *witness*, one who testifies concerning facts within his own knowledge. Thus, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established;" Matt. xviii. 16. See also Matt. xxvi. 65; Luke xxiv. 48; Acts xxvi. 16; 1 Tim. v. 19; 2 Tim. ii. 2. Such is its meaning here. The apostles had long before been selected from the company of believers, for this very purpose; they had been admitted to the most intimate intercourse with Jesus for years, had heard his instructions, seen his mighty works, and been convinced by infallible proofs of his resurrection from the dead. They were, therefore, competent witnesses, fully qualified to testify concerning him. See note at the end of Matthew. And they were about to be invested with additional power, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, bringing distinctly to their remembrance all which they had seen and heard, and enabling them to communicate the truth to all men, to each in his own language, and to confirm the word with signs following. Mark xvi. 20; Acts ii. 43; v. 12; Heb. ii. 4. ¶ *Unto me.* That is, concerning me; or the whole phrase may be understood as equivalent to, "Ye shall be my witnesses." ¶ *In Jerusalem.* It was well that the

apostles should there first elevate the banner of their Lord, and commence that mighty work which was destined to extend its triumphs, until the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Rev. xi. 15. It was fitting that their Master's deepest humiliation should be succeeded by the first display of his exaltation in the same city, and in view of the same people. It was also in accordance with the divine plan that salvation should first be offered to the Jews. Matt. x. 5, 6; xv. 24; Acts iii. 25, 26. See note on ver. 4. ¶ *All Judea.* The southern portion of the Holy Land. When the kingdom was divided, in the days of Rehoboam, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained together, constituting the kingdom of Judah, and the ten revolted tribes were denominated the kingdom of Israel; and a similar distinction thenceforth prevailed between the two sections, as the land of Judah or Judea, and the land of Israel. But after the captivity, the principal portion of the Jews who returned from Babylon settled at and near Jerusalem; and the territory formerly belonging to the ten tribes remained chiefly in possession of the Samaritans, Idumeans, Arabians, and Philistines. Although the Jews were extensively spread over the Holy Land in the days of our Saviour, yet even then the name Judea was applied to only a small portion of the territory originally assigned to the children of Israel. ¶ *Samaria.* The country lying between Judea on the south and Galilee on the north; being the central portion of the land of Canaan. When our Lord first sent forth his disciples, he forbade them to enter into any city of the Samaritans, Matt. x. 5; for, although they claimed Abraham for their father, yet a deadly enmity existed between them and the Jews, and the disciples were to avoid them as they avoided the Gentiles. But now their commission was enlarged. They were to go into all the world, and teach all nations. Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15. And, as Samaria was before excluded by name, it was peculiarly proper that it should be specially named in this enlarged and general commission. ¶ *Uttermost part of the earth.* The earth sometimes indicates no more

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was

taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

than the land of Judea. But here it should be understood in its unlimited sense, as including the habitable world. This is evident, not only from the structure of the sentence, which is a regular climax, but also from the nature of the work committed to the disciples. God had promised to give his Son the heaven for an inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for a possession; and had appointed him both to restore the preserved of Israel, and to be a light to the Gentiles and salvation unto the end of the earth. Ps. ii. 8; Isa. xlix. 6. The Son had given himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man. 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9. With much propriety, therefore, did he command his apostles to proclaim the gospel to all nations, even to the uttermost part of the earth. They manifestly understood the command to be thus broad and extensive; if not at first, they so understood it after the Spirit had more fully enlightened their minds; and their subsequent history shows with what faithfulness and success they obeyed it. Most of the then known world heard the sound of the gospel, before their labors ended. It may be added that the assurance and command, contained in this verse, supplied the place of a direct answer to the question in ver. 6. Thus, though not in terms, yet by necessary implication, the apostles were admonished that they should look for a spiritual kingdom instead of a temporal. And while it was not asserted that the kingdom should then or ever be restored to Israel in particular, yet it was distinctly implied that the kingdom should in due time be established in the whole earth, and all should be subjected to its influence.

9. *When he had spoken, &c.* That is, immediately after he ceased speaking, and before they separated. ¶ *While they beheld.* It was of the utmost importance that the disciples should be eye-witnesses of the ascension of Jesus; otherwise, how could they be certain of the fact? They did not see him rise from the dead; nor was it necessary; because by seeing him, conversing with him, and handling him, after his resurrection, they were convinced of the fact by infallible

proofs. But no such proof of his ascension could have been given. Had they not witnessed his ascension, a reasonable doubt might have been entertained whether he had truly ascended, or whether he had retired to a place of concealment on the earth. It pleased God not only to relieve the minds of the disciples from all doubt, but to enable them to give positive testimony to others that their Lord had both risen from the dead and ascended on high. ¶ *He was taken up.* Our Lord ascended from that part of the mount of Olives which was near the village of Bethany. See ver. 12, and Luke xxiv. 50, 51. The place to which he ascended cannot be determined definitely; yet it is not wholly absurd to conceive of heaven as a place, a distinct locality. See note on John xiv. 2, 3. As to the situation of that place, whether *up* or *down* with respect to the earth, see note on Acts vii. 34. ¶ *A cloud received him out of their sight.* There could be no deception here. They were on the top of a mountain. And from this height, Jesus ascended so much higher as to be lost from vision among the clouds. Having seen so much, the disciples could not reasonably doubt that he had actually ascended, as he said he should, to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. Unlike Lazarus who was miraculously reanimated, he did not die again; but he departed from the earth bodily. It is generally supposed that our Lord left the earth, clothed with the identical body which had been nailed to the cross; and that it was spiritualized on its passage from earth to heaven. Recently, the idea has been advanced that Jesus came forth from the tomb, clad in a spiritual body, so closely resembling the earthly as to be readily recognized. See note on Luke xxiv. 39. It is not material to the main fact, which of these theories be adopted. It is sufficient for us, that the apostles, who were eye-witnesses of these wonders, were convinced, by infallible proofs, that their Lord, who had been dead, was alive again, and that he ascended from the earth into the region of the clouds. Whether his body was spiritualized at his resurrection or at his ascension, its condition

10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel:

11 Which also said, Ye men of

Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

was such as to give them ocular demonstration of the material facts.

10. *They looked steadfastly toward heaven.* Probably his departure was unexpected, notwithstanding it had been predicted; for the apostles were slow of heart to believe. But, in any case, it was natural that their gaze should be riveted for a time on that point of space where they caught the last glimpse of their ascending Lord. ¶ *Two men.* We may regard these as celestial messengers, though called men on account of their appearance in human form. Thus was our Lord's departure from the earth, like his advent, attended by the ministry of angels. ¶ *In white apparel.* The emblem of purity, and often described as the visible garb of angels. See Matt. xxviii. 3; Mark xvi. 5. "As two angels are mentioned only as addressing the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus (John xx. 12; Luke xxiv. 4), it is no unnatural supposition that these were the same who had been designated to the honorable office of bearing witness to his resurrection, and of giving them all the information about that resurrection, and of his ascension, which their circumstances needed."—*Burnes.*

11. *Ye men of Galilee.* Most of the apostles had resided in Galilee, the northern province of Canaan. Our Lord also dwelt several years in that province; namely, in Nazareth, where he was brought up, and in Capernaum, to which place he removed after he commenced his public ministry. Matt. ii. 22, 23; iv. 13; Luke iv. 16. ¶ *Why stand ye gazing, &c.* This question is somewhat similar to that recorded in Luke xxiv. 5, 6: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." It was useless for the disciples to gaze longer on the clouds. Jesus had gone far beyond the reach of their vision. Mortal eyes could not penetrate the heavenly mansions whither he had gone. A similar assurance also was given in this case as in the other. *Then* they were assured that he would meet them in Galilee, as he had promised; *now* they were assured

that his promise to return again should certainly be fulfilled. ¶ *Into heaven.* Into the immediate presence of God. See note on John xiv. 2, 3. ¶ *Shall so come in like manner, &c.* Various opinions have been entertained concerning the coming of our Lord, here indicated. Very many have supposed it to be his coming at the last judgment, so called. But, aside from the question whether what is generally called the last judgment can be satisfactorily proved from the scriptures, it seems altogether unnatural to suppose the angels to refer to a period, many centuries distant, when their language seems to imply that some at least of the persons addressed should witness the coming of the Lord. Especially is this true, when his own previous declarations to his disciples are taken into the account. He had taught them to expect that he would appear and establish his kingdom in a visibly glorious manner. And in reply to their inquiry *when* he would thus appear, and what should be the sign of his coming, he enumerated several signs, and solemnly declared, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Matt. xxiv. 34. And, on another occasion, he uttered similar language: "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matt. xvi. 28. These predictions clearly pointed to a period near at hand; and it is certain, that, however widely they mistook the spiritual import of the language, the apostles expected to witness this coming, during their lifetime. They uniformly speak of it as a nearly approaching event, and exhort their brethren to be prepared for it at any moment. In so doing, they imitated their Master, who taught them to watch constantly, lest, when he came, he should find them sleeping. Mark xiii. 33—37. And although he did not profess to know the exact hour when he should come, yet he positively declared that some then living should be eye-witnesses of this glorious event. These predictions so clearly point to the

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey.

period when Jerusalem was destroyed, his adversaries crushed, and his kingdom established through the influence of his gospel, that few are hardy enough in the present day to deny the fact. And to what event can the language of the angels here be more appropriately applied, than to this? If it be objected, that Jesus ascended in a cloud, and the angels declared that he should "*so come in like manner*," it may be replied that he described his coming in that generation in a similar manner, and in terms of even more exalted grandeur. He said they should see him "come in the glory of his Father, with his angels;" "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," when he would "send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 30, 31. Yet all this was to be accomplished before the whole number of his auditors should die. See note on Matt. xvi. 27, 28. So obvious is this application of the phrase, *shall so come in like manner*, that it did not escape the notice of Bishop Pearce, who says,—“That is, with marks of divine power; though not the same marks, yet as strong ones. It is not said that they should *see* him come, but that he should come in like manner as they saw him go: we may therefore suppose, that only Jesus's coming to visit the Jewish nation in their destruction is here meant by the angels.” Barnes interprets the passage differently; yet he admits the terms used do not necessarily imply that the coming of the Lord shall be visible, except in its effects or results: “It is remarkable that when the return of the Saviour is mentioned, it is uniformly said he will return *in the clouds*. Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64; Mark xiii. 26; Rev. i. 7; Dan. vii. 13. The clouds are an emblem of sublimity and grandeur, and perhaps this is all that is intended by these expressions. Deut. iv. 11; 2 Sam. xxii. 12; Ps. xcvi. 2; civ. 3.”

12. *Then returned they unto Jerusalem.* In his Gospel, xxiv. 52, Luke informs us that the disciples worshipped their ascended Lord, of whose divine Sonship they had now received the

crowning evidence, by witnessing his ascension into heaven. Having thus acknowledged Jesus to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father, they returned into Jerusalem, to await the promised communication of the Holy Spirit. Doubtless their conceptions of this gift were crude and imperfect, and they had but a confused idea of the work whereunto they were appointed; for, up to this time, they had fondly clung to the hope of an earthly kingdom, over which Jesus should reign, and in which themselves should be advanced to stations of the highest honor. This dazzling prospect had blinded their eyes to the true spiritual meaning of much that they had heard; and they were now in much doubt what the end of these things should be. Yet of this they felt certain, that Jesus was the Son of God, and that implicit obedience was due to his word. Such obedience they rendered, by returning to Jerusalem, and there remaining until they were “endued with power from on high.” ¶ *Mount called Olivet.* Or, the Mount of Olives, from which Jesus ascended. See note on Matt. xxi. 1. ¶ *Sabbath-day's journey.* That is, nearly eight furlongs, or about one English mile. The highest point of the Mount of Olives is said to be only five furlongs from the holy city. Bethany was situated on the eastern declivity of the mount, on the side farthest from Jerusalem; and the tract surrounding the village was called the region of Bethany. By supposing that our Lord went beyond the top of the mount, and descended so far towards the village as to enter the region of Bethany, we may harmonize the two accounts given here and in Luke xxiv. 50, at a point about one mile eastwardly from Jerusalem. “These words do not define the exact distance of the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem, which indeed was but five furlongs; nor do they take in the town of Bethany within the bounds of the Sabbath, which was distant fifteen furlongs, John xi. 18; but they point out that place of the mount where our Saviour ascended into heaven; namely, that place where that tract of the Mount of Olives ceased to be called Bethphage, and began to be called

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew,

Bethany."—*Lightfoot*. The extent of a Sabbath-day's journey is not fixed by the Mosaic law; but Jewish writers represent it as a little less than one English mile. Various reasons are assigned; one of which is, that, during the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness, the outermost border of their encampment was at that distance from the tabernacle, and it was adjudged right to travel so far as was necessary to attend the public worship of God, and no further.

13. *Were come in*. Either into Jerusalem, or into the house which they temporarily occupied. ¶ *An upper room*. Because Luke says, xxiv. 53, the apostles "were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God," after the ascension of Jesus, some have supposed this upper room was an apartment in the temple. But this supposition seems improbable, because the temple was in the custody of the priests, who would not probably permit the apostles thus to appropriate a room to themselves. By their being in the temple continually, no more is implied than that they were regularly in attendance at the stated hours of religious worship. It does not appear, however, that they made themselves conspicuous there, until after they received power from on high. Then, indeed, they openly and boldly proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom. The upper room, here mentioned, was probably, if not the same, at least similar to that in which our Lord ate the Passover and instituted the Supper. See note on Matt. vi. 6; xxvi. 19. Almost every house in Jerusalem contained such a room, designed for retirement, meditation, and prayer. In this room, the little company of disciples, male and female, assembled, that they might commune concerning the wonderful events which they had witnessed. ¶ *Where abode*. We need not understand that this was their permanent habitation, though it is not improbable that the house belonged to a believer, who allowed them to make it their home during the ten days which intervened between the ascension and

and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother of James*.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,

the day of Pentecost. Nor need we suppose they shut themselves up entirely in this house, spending their whole time in prayer and supplication, ver. 14; because we are assured they were regular in their attendance at the temple. Luke xxiv. 53. But so much of their time as was not thus occupied, was devoted to social worship. ¶ *Peter, &c.* The names of the twelve apostles are enumerated, with slight variations, in three other places; Matt. x. 2—4; Mark iii. 16—19; Luke vi. 13—16. Perhaps the historian names them individually here, in order to show distinctly that all remained faithful except the traitor, Judas. See notes on Matt. x. 2—4.

14. *These all continued, &c.* That is, they were constant in their devotion. This was their principal occupation. It is not implied that they did nothing else. Doubtless they conversed with each other concerning the glorious ascension of their Master, and his promised return; and concerning the predicted outpouring of the Spirit. But their principal business was prayer and other devotional exercises. A similar form of speech occurs in Acts vi. 4: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." Some time must necessarily have been devoted to refreshment and sleep; but such was the main business to which they devoted the remainder of their lives. ¶ *With one accord*. Unitedly, in spirit as well as in act. They were equally in doubt and perplexity, equally helpless, so far as human power was concerned; they shared a common affliction, for they did not yet fully understand that it was expedient for them that Jesus should depart, John xvi. 7; and they were conscious of their common need of the divine protection, and guidance, and assistance. None, therefore, were cold, formal, or uninterested; but their hearts were united in drawing near to the throne of grace. ¶ *Prayer and supplication*. These words are nearly synonymous in signification. So far as a difference exists, prayer is more comprehensive, and may be said

with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15 ¶ And in those days Peter

to include supplication. But in this case, the circumstances in which the disciples were placed render it probable that their prayers consisted chiefly in supplications for deliverance from the distresses they endured, for protection against apprehended evils, and for the bestowment of such blessings as were needful to them in their helpless and apparently unprotected condition.

¶ *With the women.* Only one female is called by name, yet it is easy to imagine who were the others. At the cross were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, the mother of Zebedee's children, and others, who followed Jesus from Galilee. They also were at the sepulchre, on the morning of the resurrection. Doubtless they were among the number who assembled with the apostles in that upper room in Jerusalem. It is not improbable that the wives of some of the apostles were also there. Peter's wife, whose mother had been miraculously healed by Jesus, Matt. viii. 14, 15, was probably a believer; and, if she shared her husband's energy, might have travelled with the others from Galilee to Jerusalem. However this be, there were some devoted females, who persevered in their profession of faith in Jesus, notwithstanding the dangers which beset his followers. ¶ *And Mary the mother of Jesus.* It is not expressly stated that Mary witnessed the ascension of her son; yet we can scarcely doubt that this favor was granted to her. During his youth, she had carefully treasured up in her heart the wonders attending his birth, and all the indications he manifested of his divine parentage; she believed his testimony, when he commenced his public ministry; she was with him in the closing hour, and witnessed his agonizing death on the cross. Then, indeed, a sword pierced through her soul. Luke ii. 35. The wound was healed, partially at least, by his resurrection; and it is certainly reasonable to suppose that she was permitted to behold his ascension to glory. Immediately afterwards, we find her here with the disciples, as one of the company of believers. In-

stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

deed, she was specially committed to the custody of the beloved John, and probably had no home but his. Tradition says that she lived about fifteen years after this period, and John declares that she dwelt with him, John xix. 26, 27. This, however, is the last mention which is made of her in the scriptures. And it may be remarked, that, while the apostles generally treated her with respect, and John in particular cherished her as a mother, there is no evidence that any of them offered religious worship to her. ¶ *With his brethren.* These may have been his brethren by Mary, or the children of Joseph by a former marriage; or perhaps only kin-men, called brethren by a Hebrew idiom. See note on Matt. xiii. 55.

15. Hitherto, the historian recapitulates, with some additional particulars, the events which he briefly noticed at the end of his gospel; Luke xxiv. 49—53; namely, the ascension of our Lord and the return of his disciples to Jerusalem. He now commences the main subject of this treatise, and proceeds to recount the labors and success of the apostles. ¶ *In those days.* That is, very soon after the ascension. Jesus was crucified during the Feast of the Passover; he showed himself to his disciples, after his resurrection, for the space of forty days; and they received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, which was only fifty days subsequent to the Passover. Acts ii. 1. Not more than ten days at the utmost, therefore, could have intervened between the ascension and the day of Pentecost; and o this short period, the phrase *those days* must be limited. ¶ *Peter stood up, &c.* As heretofore, this apostle appears foremost in action. Perhaps he was the eldest of the apostles; most certainly, he was the most sanguine and energetic of the original Twelve. It is perfectly characteristic of him that he should now take the lead, and recommend to his brethren the expediency of filling the vacancy in their number, occasioned by the defection of Judas. ¶ *In the midst of the disciples.* That is, of the



16 *Men and brethren*, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the

mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

whole number then assembled. It is observable, that the Eleven did not assume the right and responsibility of setting apart a new apostle; but they submitted the matter to the whole company of believers, who were requested to select two, between whom the choice should be decided by lot, after a solemn appeal to God. It has been well observed that this example "settles the question that the election of a minister and pastor should be by the church, and not be imposed on them by any right of presentation by individuals, or by any ecclesiastical body. If a case could ever occur where a minister should be chosen by the ministry only, such a case was here in the election of another apostle. And yet in this the entire church had a voice."—*Burnes*. ¶ *Number of the names*. Or, the number of persons. *Names* is often used in this sense in the scriptures. ¶ *About a hundred and twenty*. Some have supposed this to be the full number of persons who had then acknowledged Jesus as a true prophet of God, and the promised Messiah. Others have considered it more probable that he had converted a somewhat larger number, during his personal ministry. Paul tells us, that, on one occasion after his resurrection, our Lord "was seen by above five hundred brethren at once." 1 Cor. xv. 6. This was undoubtedly before his ascension. It is possible, to be sure, that these five hundred did not become believers, or brethren in the faith, until after the day of Pentecost; but it is quite as consistent with the language of Paul to suppose they were believers when they enjoyed this beatific vision. Perhaps the truth may be, that some hundreds were disciples, but "secretly for fear of the Jews," John xix. 38; and that only about one hundred and twenty had sufficient fortitude and self-devotion to acknowledge their faith in Jesus. So many had assembled; and to them was the language of Peter addressed. He took it for granted that their faith was strong, and that they had no intention to abandon the enterprise in which they were engaged. The election of a new apostle distinctly indicated a fixed purpose to persevere

at all hazards, and to go forward in the name of the Lord.

16. *Men and brethren*. This may be regarded as a pleonasm, meaning simply brethren. It was a customary form of speech among the Jews. See Acts xiii. 26; xv. 7, 13; xxii. 1. ¶ *This scripture*. The word *scripture* literally means writing, or the thing written. But, in the Bible, it is generally applied to the Holy Writings; and such is the meaning almost universally attached to it by Christians. It must be remembered, however, that when this word occurs in the New Testament, it almost uniformly refers exclusively to the Old Testament. So far as I recollect, the only two instances where this word appears to refer to the writings of the New Testament are 2 Tim. iii. 16, and 2 Pet. iii. 16; and, even in these cases, it may be doubted whether such was the original reference, however true the facts may be in regard to the New Testament as well as the Old. The particular scripture, or portion of the Old Testament, here referred to, has been supposed by many to be Ps. xli. 9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." There seems to be a manifest allusion to this passage in ver. 17; though, it should be observed, Jesus never trusted in Judas, but knew him to be a "devil" from the beginning. John ii. 25; vi. 70. The passage quoted in ver. 20, however, is found in another place. ¶ *Must needs*. *Must*; an antiquated form of speech. It may be questionable whether the language of David originally had direct reference to Judas. But his conduct and its results were so similar to the description given by the prophet, that the prophecy might be regarded as fulfilled. See note on Matt. ii. 15. ¶ *Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake*. This is a distinct affirmation that David was guided by divine inspiration, in what he wrote; and this is undoubtedly true. Yet it should not be disguised, that when Peter uttered these words, he had not himself received the Holy Ghost; and, consequently, we must regard his testimony as that of a good man and a

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a

firm believer in divine revelation, but not as absolutely authoritative. ¶ *Concerning Judas.* Whether or not the language of David had original reference to Judas, it might properly be said to be concerning him, because it was so applicable to his conduct and fate. Our Lord himself had previously applied the same language to Judas: "That the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me." John xiii. 18. So precisely did the language correspond with the character of Judas, that our Saviour declared the scripture was thus fulfilled. And in this sense it was a scripture concerning Judas, whether its primary reference were to him or not. ¶ *Which was guide, &c.* See Matt. xxvi. 47—49.

17. *For he was numbered with us.* He was accounted an apostle and a true follower of Jesus. He enjoyed equal privileges with the other apostles. The world perceived no difference in their honesty and sincerity. The apostles themselves had so little suspicion of Judas, that, when Jesus declared one of them should betray him, instead of turning their eyes simultaneously on him as the traitor, each one began to inquire, "Lord, is it I?" Matt. xxvi. 21, 22. Thus far Judas was numbered with the apostles. But, at heart, he had no true connection with them; and this was perfectly understood by his Master, who saw the heart, and often intimated his entire want of confidence in him. It may, at first sight, seem singular that Jesus should have assigned a part in the ministry to one who was so utterly destitute of the qualities necessary to constitute a true and faithful apostle. But in this, as in all his conduct, he was guided by divine wisdom. Had all the apostles proved faithful, his enemies might have alleged that Jesus was truly guilty of iniquity, of which his apostles were partakers, and that they persisted in their protestations of his innocence to shield themselves from condemnation with him. But this allegation was taken from them by Judas. Whether or not he was ever sincerely attached to his Master, he was tempted

field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

to sell him for money. Yet, traitor as he was, nothing could induce him to say that Jesus was guilty of any iniquity. The Jews would have paid almost any price for such testimony. They did obtain false witnesses. Mark xiv. 55—59. Could they have prevailed on Judas to accuse him, they would gladly have given a magnificent recompense of reward. But his testimony was far different. He proclaimed the entire innocence of his Master, and acknowledged that all the guilt was his own. Matt. xxvii. 4. Such testimony from a man who had full opportunity to discover any possible fault in our Saviour's character, and who had proved himself a traitor, should for ever seal the lips of all adversaries and all doubters. For had there been the slightest possible foundation for a charge of ungodliness, Judas would have eagerly grasped it, as an excuse for his treason, and with the hope of further reward. The choice of such a man, when viewed in this light, manifests wisdom.

18. *This man purchased, &c.* The money which Judas received for his treachery, and subsequently threw down in the temple, when his efforts to liberate Jesus proved unavailing, was expended by the rulers in the purchase of a field for the burial of strangers. Matt. xxvii. 3—8. Although Judas did not personally bargain for this field, yet he furnished the means for its purchase; and it is common to represent a man as doing that which he causes or procures to be done; and the same holds true, where one furnishes the means by which others are enabled to accomplish any specified work. ¶ *Reward of iniquity.* Namely, the thirty pieces of silver which the rulers covenanted to pay him for betraying his Master. ¶ *Falling headlong.* This account differs somewhat from that given by Matthew; yet the two may be reconciled. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 24; xxvii. 5. Comparing one with the other, it seems probable that Judas endured such grief and horror of mind, in contemplating his awful crime, that he was choked or suffocated

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; inso-much as that field is called in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book

by the violence of his feelings; and, falling headlong or prone upon the earth, he burst asunder, as here stated. This appears more consistent with all the facts in the case, than the supposition that he committed suicide by hanging. Of the reasons which induce me to prefer this exposition, I shall mention only one. The falling headlong would be a natural consequence of suffocation or strangling, but an unnatural result of hanging. In mentioning his death, the historian might very properly record the result, without distinctly specifying the cause; and, by the expression here used, he sufficiently denotes the fact that Judas perished by a remarkable and miserable death. But, on the supposition that he died by his own hand, it is very remarkable that the historian should not mention the fact. He does not even allude to it; for the circumstance mentioned by him is so far from intimating suicide by hanging, that it is altogether an unnatural result of such an action. Apart from other information, no one would suspect, from this allusion, that Judas hung himself. It might be supposed that he fell by accident or in a convulsion, or apoplexy, or fainting fit; but suspension by a rope would be among the last possible suspected causes of falling headlong. If, then, as is reasonable, the historian be supposed to allude to the manner of the traitor's death, we need not hesitate to conclude that it was occasioned by suffocation, rather than hanging. That the account given by Matthew is susceptible of this interpretation has been shown in the note on that passage.

19. *It was known*, &c. That is, the treachery and death of Judas, and the purchase of the field with the wages of iniquity. ¶ *Proper tongue*. That is, the language then in common use among the Jews, which was not the proper Hebrew, but the Syro-chaldaic. ¶ *Aceldama*. This word is composed of two others, and literally signifies, as here stated, the field of blood. This verse and the preceding are generally considered parenthetical. And there are good reasons for regarding them as the language of Luke, not of Peter. The reference to the name of the field,

and the explanation of that name, would be very unnatural in Peter, but very natural in Luke. It should be remembered that Peter's address to his brethren was less than fifty days subsequent to the time when the events occurred. Possibly the field had then been named; yet Peter could scarcely be expected to refer to that fact as a corroboration of his assertion. Besides, the name given was in the language commonly used by the Jews; and there is no evidence that any except Jews were then present with Peter. The explanation of that name was given in Greek, a language not in common use among the Jews. It is highly improbable that Peter should mention a name which his hearers well understood, being a word in their own proper tongue, and then give its explanation in a foreign tongue. But with Luke the case was different. He wrote several years after the occurrence of the events narrated; and it was natural that he should refer to this name, as a standing monument of the fact, corroborating his history. He particularly addressed a Greek, as the name seems to imply, and designed his narration for the use of those who were not acquainted with the proper tongue of the Jews; and it was natural that he should explain the words of that language, when he had occasion to use them. This he did frequently. See Acts iv. 36; ix. 36; xiii. 8. And such was the custom of the evangelists, when writing for the information of those who were not familiarly acquainted with the language of the Jews.

20. *It is written*, &c. The passages here referred to, but not literally quoted, are supposed to be Ps. lxi. 25; cix. 8. Whether either of these Psalms had primary reference to the Messiah, or whether they are so applied by accommodation, is a question not easily determined. It is certain that several passages in Ps. lxi. are quoted by the evangelists in reference to Jesus, and it is remarkable that no portion of it appears to be necessarily limited to David. See John ii. 17; xix. 29; compared with Ps. lxi. 9, 21. And it has been said concerning the quotation from Ps. cix. 8, "If it primarily relate

of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His bishoprick let another take.

21. Wherefore of these men

either to Doeg or Ahithophel, the mortal enemies of David, it might by the Holy Spirit be intended to have its full completion in the betrayer of the Son of David."—*Whitby*. ¶ *Let his habitation be desolate, &c.* This is an image of destruction from the face of the earth; and it had been fulfilled in the case of Judas. His former dwelling-place had become desolate, and he should return to it no more. ¶ *His bishopric, &c.* Literally, his overseership. The word rendered *bishop* means simply an overseer, whether of the church, or of a civil or a military community. See 2 Kings xi. 19; Neh. xi. 9, 14, 22; Acts xx. 28. And the word here rendered *bishopric* bears the same relation to the other, as bishopric to bishop, or overseership to overseer. The distinction in rank or authority among the clergy, which these terms have more recently been made to indicate, was unknown in the days of the apostles. The apostles were chief rulers, but not styled bishops; they were exalted, as if on twelve thrones, to pronounce with authority concerning matters of faith and practice in the kingdom of their Lord. But there is no evidence, that any distinction in rank or authority was recognised among those whom they ordained as elders, or presbyters, or bishops, by which several names they are indifferently called. And it has been shrewdly observed, that "it is scarcely necessary to add that Peter here did not intend to affirm that Judas sustained any office corresponding to what is now commonly understood by the term bishop."

21. *Wherefore, &c.* In accordance with the language before quoted, it was proposed that the office which Judas had sustained, however unworthily, and from which he had been cut off, should now be filled, that the original number, twelve, might enter upon the great work assigned them. It does not appear for what special reason the apostles proceeded to elect an associate in the stead of Judas, unless it were that they then thought it expedient to preserve the same number that their Lord

which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that

originally appointed. But they subsequently seem to have disregarded the precise number; for, when they were satisfied that Paul was called of the Lord to be an apostle, they gladly received him as such, increasing their number to thirteen. And we have no evidence that the survivors elected any successors to those who were removed by death. ¶ *Companied with us, all the time, &c.* It was thought to be an indispensable qualification of an apostle, that he should have been personally acquainted with the conduct of Jesus during his whole ministry. Two obvious reasons may be assigned for this opinion: (1.) Such a one would be more fully acquainted with all the facts which he was to proclaim; and (2.) having already endured persecution and remained faithful thus long, he might the more reasonably expect and be expected to continue unmoved by the trials and persecutions afterwards to be encountered. ¶ *Went in and out.* A common expression to denote the usual and constant habits of life.

22. *Beginning from the baptism of John.* That is, from the time when Jesus made his first public appearance, and was indicated as a divine messenger. Thus particular was Peter, that the person to be elected an apostle should have personal knowledge of the important events in our Lord's life, from the very commencement of his ministry. ¶ *Unto that same day, &c.* The candidate must have remained faithful even to the end. True, all the apostles forsook Jesus in his hour of extremity, and were scattered like sheep. But their courage revived when they knew he had risen from the dead, and they again attached themselves to him; and so much they required of the person whom they would present before the Lord for election and confirmation. He must have witnessed the ascension, as well as the baptism, the mighty works, and the crucifixion of our Lord. ¶ *Must one be ordained.* This should be regarded as a recommendation rather than a command; or rather, perhaps, as an opinion expressed by

he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

23 And they appointed two, Jo-

Peter, that such an election was necessary for the complete fulfilment of the scripture which he had quoted. That another might take the oversight formerly belonging to Judas, and become an authorized witness of the resurrection, it was necessary that he should be thereunto elected and appointed. This is all which is here meant by being ordained. The forms and ceremonies, to which this term is now technically applied, were then unknown; except, it would seem, the apostles were accustomed to lay their hands on the head of any one appointed as a minister of the word, and to give unto him the right hand of fellowship. Gal. ii. 9; 1 Tim. v. 22. But it does not appear that even this was done in the present case. The appeal was made for a divine decision; and this was sufficient. See note on Mark iii.

14. ¶ *Witness with us of his resurrection.* The great labor of the apostles was to convince men that Jesus had truly risen from the dead. This fact lies at the very foundation of Christianity. If this cannot be proved, no reliance can be placed on the testimony of Jesus as a divinely commissioned teacher. If it be proved, then is he effectually declared to be the Son of God. Rom. i. 4. Accordingly, we find the apostles uniformly laboring, first of all, to establish this fact; rightly judging that as many as were convinced would believe his testimony. Whether they were competent and credible witnesses of this fact, see note at the end of Matthew.

23. *They appointed two, &c.* This appointment or selection of the two candidates seems to have been made by the whole company of believers then present. The individuals selected were of course well known, as they had followed Jesus during his whole ministry, ver. 21; and they were probably eminent for their observance of his precepts. It is reasonable to suppose their qualifications were so equal in the minds of the apostles, that it was difficult for mere human reason to decide the preference; and the apostles would not assume the responsibility. ¶ *Joseph*

called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the

*called Barsabas.* Of this person we have no particular account in the scriptures. Some have supposed him to be the same who is elsewhere called Barnabas. But of this there is no sufficient evidence; and Lightfoot, whose skill in Hebrew was never questioned, says that these two names are altogether different in signification, and cannot properly be supposed to have designated the same person. ¶ *Matthias.* We know little more of this person, upon whom the lot of apostleship fell, than of the other. Some of the ancients supposed him to have been one of the seventy disciples; and that, after his election, he preached and died at Colchis. But we have no account in the scriptures of his labors, success, sufferings, or death.

24. *And they prayed, &c.* Not presuming, upon their own responsibility, to elect and set apart an associate, they appealed to God to indicate which of the two brethren presented before him should attain the rank of an apostle. The manner in which they sought to know the divine will, namely by the casting of lots, might be justifiable at that time, when God frequently interposed by miracle to carry forward the great work committed to his Son; but, at present, since the discontinuance of miraculous interpositions, it would be an unsafe method of decision. We may better depend on the conclusion of our own reason, guided by revelation, than trust to the chance of lots. The apostles, however, did not regard it as chance, but as the decision of God, in answer to prayer; and so it was, we may believe, in this particular instance. Many have supposed this prayer was directly addressed to Jesus Christ, and hence have argued his supreme divinity. But, if the fact were so, the conclusion would not necessarily follow. The apostles who had so long and so recently been accustomed to ask favors of their Master, without the slightest suspicion that he was the Supreme God, might implore him to manifest his choice of an apostle, without recognizing him as God, or contemplating any thing

hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

more miraculous than they had previously witnessed. And, moreover, whatever ideas they might have entertained concerning his character, it should not be forgotten that they had not yet received the Holy Ghost, and must be regarded simply as men; honest men, to be sure, but men who had labored under a constant mistake for years concerning their Master's true character, and who *might* still be mistaken, for aught that appears to the contrary. But it is by no means probable that their prayer was addressed to Jesus. The principal argument, urged in proof that it was thus addressed, is, that the term *Lord* is used, by which they had been accustomed to address him. But this term is very frequently applied to Father, in both the Old and New Testament. See Matt. xi. 25; Luke i. 25, 46, 58. The applications of this term are so various in the scriptures, — to God, to his Son, to the king by a subject, to the master by a servant, to the husband by the wife, — that its use proves nothing definitely concerning the person addressed, except superiority. To say the least, the term is quite as applicable to the Father as to the Son; hence its use here does not prove that the apostles directly addressed Jesus. Moreover, he had given them an express direction in what manner they should pray, or ask blessings, after his return to the Father: "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you." John xvi. 23. If they obeyed his command, it is clear that this prayer was not addressed to him; if they did not, it should be remembered that they had not yet received the Holy Ghost. ¶ *Knowest the hearts of all men.* God looketh directly on the heart, and knoweth the precise moral condition and capability of every man. To him, therefore, was the appeal made, with the utmost propriety, that he should indicate his choice of an apostle. ¶ *Whether of these two.* Which of these two. The apostles seem to have been satisfied that the candidates selected were the two most suitable; but they took not the responsibility of deciding between them.

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from

25. *That he may take part, &c.* The word here rendered *part* is the same which, in ver. 26, is translated *lot*. It means here the portion which should be assigned by lot; that is, the office, authority, and duty, of an apostle. ¶ *Of this ministry and apostleship.* This phrase, by a Hebrew idiom, may be considered equivalent to *apostolical ministry*, or apostolical service. ¶ *From which Judas by transgression fell.* The reference is manifestly to the fact, that Judas had once been an apostle, and fell from that honorable station by his apostacy and treason. This station he forfeited before his death; and, even had he been living, there would have been the same necessity to fill the vacancy, if he had not repented and returned, like Peter, to his first love. ¶ *That he might go to his own place.* Various interpretations have been given of this passage. It has long been very generally interpreted to mean, that Judas departed from this life to a state of endless misery; or, in the more common phrase, that he went to hell, as his own or proper place. To this interpretation, many sufficient objections have been made, which I prefer to state chiefly in the language of commentators who believed that some men must endure endless misery. The objections may be comprehended in two: — (1.) If the words were spoken concerning Judas, they admit an interpretation more in accordance with the general testimony of the Scriptures; and (2.) the language probably does not refer to Judas, but to the apostle about to be designated. "Some suppose that the words, *that he might go to his own place*, are spoken of Judas, and his punishment in hell, which they say must be the *own place* of such a person as Judas. Others refer them to the purchase of the field, made by the thirty pieces of silver, for which he had sold our Lord. So he abandoned the ministry and apostolate, *that he might go to his own place*, namely, that which he had purchased. Others, with more seeming propriety, state that *his own place* means his own house, or former occupation: he left this ministry and apostleship, that he might resume his former employment,

which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their

in conjunction with his family, &c. This is primarily the meaning of it in Numb. xxiv. 25; and Balaam returned to *his own place*, that is, to his own country, friends, and employment. Others think it simply means the state of the dead in general, independently of either rewards or punishments, as is probably meant by Eccl. iii. 20: 'All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.' But some of the best critics assert, that the words (as before hinted) belong to Matthias; his own place being the office to which he was about to be elected." — *Clarke*. "*His own place*: What is here meant by *ho topos ho idios* (ὁ τόπος ὁ ἴδιος), may be best collected from the *kleros diakonias kai apostolēs* (κλήρος διακονίας καὶ ἀποστολῆς), *lot or portion of ministry and apostleship*, that is, of apostolical ministry, in the beginning of the verse, the taking of which is preparative here to his going to this. That certainly signifies, in Phavorinus, a *part or portion*, that falls to any, particularly a province that belongs to any governor, and (if that be a bishop or governor of the church, then) such a province, styled, ver. 20, out of the Psalmist, *episkopē* (ἐπισκοπή), *bishopric*, which he that succeeds in is said to *take*, there, as here to *take the portion of ministry*, &c.; and then that which is thus become any man's assigned province cannot be more fitly expressed than by the *place or province proper* to that man, assigned to him. This, therefore, regularly belonging to Judas, if he had not, by his treason against his Master, forfeited it (which is here said as in a parenthesis), Matthias now succeeds him in it, takes his lot or portion, and so is now to go to this as his own place, or province, which had else belonged to another. Many prejudices there are against understanding this place of hell, as some have understood it, as the place whither Judas was to go. For (1.) that was not the proper place or assignation of Judas, but common to all other damned spirits. (2.) It was not St. Luke's office to pass sentence on Judas, any further than by setting down the heinousness of his crime, which he had done, ver. 16—19,

lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

and was not to proceed to judge or affirm aught of God's secrets, such as his going into hell. And it is St. Chrysostom's observation on ver. 16, 'Behold the wisdom of St. Luke, how he doth not reproach or insult on Judas, but simply sets down the matter of fact,' without any descent on it; and what he adds, 'He discourses of the present vengeance,' belongs evidently to what befell him in this present world, and so excludes all enlarging to his future damnation. (3.) There is no propriety in saying of the one, that he sinned to go to hell; but of the other it is most proper to say, that he was elected to such a *kleros*, or *portion*, to go, or that he might go to it. To this accords Theophylact: 'He calls that his own place, which Matthias should obtain.' So (Ecumenius: 'It may be interpreted of Matthias, that, Judas being fallen, he should have his place for his own, receiving his bishopric;') making place and bishopric synonymous. So Didymus: the word *topos*, among many things, signifies, saith he, *an order*, as the place of a bishop or an elder. So the ordinary gloss, 'that he should go to his own place, that is, the apostolical lot,' making *place* and *lot* all one, just as I have interpreted it." — *Hammond*. To this very full note of a standard writer of the English Church, supported as it is by several writers of an earlier date, it may not be improper to add a single remark. The language in question purports to have been uttered in a solemn prayer to God. It is surely more reasonable to suppose the apostles implored God to indicate his choice of a person to take or go to a portion, or place, or station, which Judas had forfeited, than that they informed him where Judas had gone, as his own place, — a matter which he most certainly understood much more fully and accurately than they did. See note on Matt. xxvi. 24.

26. *And they gave forth their lots*. That is, the lots of Joseph and Matthias, or the lots which were to determine whether one or the other should succeed to the apostleship forfeited by Judas. See note on ver. 24. Some have

## CHAPTER II.

AND when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were

understood, by this phrase, that the apostles or the whole company determined the choice by casting their votes. But this interpretation is manifestly inconsistent with the whole account. They had selected two candidates, by vote, or by common consent. They then solemnly implored God to designate the individual. It was a common practice among the Jews to make such an appeal by lot; and this was doubtless done by the apostles. The precise manner in which the lots were cast is not known. Very probably, according to a usual custom, two pieces of wood or stone were placed in an urn, each inscribed with the name of one candidate, and two other pieces in another urn, one marked to designate the office, and the other blank. Then one piece was drawn from each urn, and the two compared. Thus drawn, it would seem the name of Joseph was found connected with the blank, and that of Matthias with the office. Thus *the lot fell upon Matthias*; and the divine will was manifested that he should succeed to the vacant apostleship, and enter into possession of his place or portion. This solemn appeal by lot cannot be regarded as an encouragement thus to decide the ordinary questions of life. Much less can it be understood to afford the slightest countenance to games of chance or hazard. These are evil, and only evil; they injure the loser, and lead the winner to ruin; and it is impious to plead on their behalf the divine approval of casting lots in the choice of an apostle. ¶ *Was numbered with the eleven apostles.* Was accounted equal to them in station, and dignity, and authority; as truly an apostle as any other. The original number was now complete. And they awaited the communication of divine power, Luke xxiv. 49, that they might fully enter upon the great duty assigned them, of preaching the resurrection of him who had been dead and was alive.

## CHAPTER II.

1. *Day of Pentecost.* So called, from its occurrence on the *fiftieth* day after

all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all

the Passover. "An enumeration of forty-nine days from the sixteenth of Abib, or the second day of the Passover, introduced us to the Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth. It is also called the Feast of Weeks, from the circumstance that it followed a succession of seven weeks, Exod. xxxiv. 22; Lev. xxiii. 15, 16; Numb. xxviii. 26; Deut. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 1. It was a festival of thanks for the harvest, and is accordingly called the Feast of the Harvest. And it was for the same reason, that two loaves made of new meal and the tenth part of an ephah of grain were offered, as the first-fruits. Lev. xxiii. 17; Numb. xxviii. 26. There were likewise, on the return of this festival, many holocausts, besides an offering for sin. Lev. xxiii. 18—20; Numb. xxviii. 27—31." — *Jahn*. This was one of the three great annual feasts, which all the males of the Israelites were required by law to attend at Jerusalem. Exod. xxxiv. 22, 23. This time seems to have been chosen for a manifestation of divine power, on account of the immense concourse of strangers in Jerusalem, who might witness the miracle, hear the gospel in their own language, and carry the glorious news into distant regions when they returned to their homes. ¶ *Was fully come.* Or, had arrived. Lightfoot states, on the authority of the Rabbins, that the fifteen days preceding the great feasts of the Jews were styled Paras, which may be regarded as days of preparation for the approaching solemnities. Thus the Jews had their Paras of the Passover, Paras of the Pentecost, &c. Possibly there may be a reference to this fact here; and the meaning may be that the Paras had ended, and the day itself of Pentecost had arrived. ¶ *With one accord.* By a common impulse, they assembled, to unite in the exercises of devotion. It would seem that they thus assembled every day, from the ascension until the day of Pentecost. Luke xxiv. 53; Acts i. 14. ¶ *In one place* Many suppose this place was in the same upper room where the apostles assembled on their return from the Mount of Olives, Acts i. 13; or in the court or



the house where they were sitting.  
3 And there appeared unto them

cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

open area belonging to that house. But others, with more seeming probability, suppose the present gathering was in the temple. "There is no certainty about the place; but it is probable that the apostles were in the temple; because it was then the third hour of the day, ver. 15, which was the Jewish hour of morning prayer in the temple, as the ninth hour was that of the evening prayer there, Acts iii. 1; and because it is said that the apostles were daily in the temple, ver. 46, and that Peter and John went up to the temple, Acts iii. 1. For these reasons they were the more likely to have been in this temple at this third hour, an hour of prayer, especially on such a solemn festival as the Pentecost was."—*Pearce*. It may be added, that the upper room, in which they first assembled, was probably a retired place, where they sought safety by concealment; and it is not natural to suppose that such a concourse of people, as are here said to be present, should have been attracted to such a place on the day of a great festival, at the very hour, too, when public prayer was offered in the temple. Moreover, three thousand persons were converted on this occasion, ver. 41, besides those who mocked and rejected the apostolical testimony; and it is exceedingly improbable that such a multitude should have heard the apostles in one day, in a private room, or even in a private court; for such courts, though sometimes spacious, were not designed for so vast an assembly.

2. *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven*. The two remarkable circumstances which attracted attention to this sound were its suddenness, and the direction whence it came. The sound of the rushing wind, during a tempest, is sometimes almost deafening, even overpowering the reverberations of the distant thunder. But it does not burst suddenly on the ear; from the soft whispering of the zephyr to the hoarse bellowings of the tornado, the progress is not instantaneous; but by various changes we are admonished of the approaching commotion of the elements, so that the highest pitch of its fury, however much it may fill us with wonder and awe, does not take us by sur-

prise. Moreover, during a tempest, the progress of the rushing wind and its sound is horizontal, not perpendicular. As we listen to its howling and shrieks, we are conscious of its progress in a horizontal direction. But, on the day of Pentecost, the multitude were surprised by a sudden sound from heaven, or from above. It was as if a peal of thunder from a clear sky had burst directly over their heads. It was this suddenness, and the direction in which the sound was heard, which arrested their attention. ¶ *As of a rushing mighty wind*. There is no evidence that any motion of the air was felt; and for this reason, the sound was the more noticeable and astonishing; as it resembled that which is produced by a violent tempest. ¶ *And it filled all the house, &c.* That is, the sound filled the house, or place where they were; in other words, all those who were present heard it distinctly.

3. *There appeared unto them*. They saw flames, somewhat tongue-shaped. The flames probably followed the sound before mentioned, as suddenly as the sound of thunder follows the lightning; or, perhaps, they were simultaneous. ¶ *Cloven tongues like as of fire*. The appearance of what they saw was like fire, and in shape like tongues, long in proportion to the breadth, and converging towards a point. This use of the word *tongue* is not unusual. We familiarly speak of a tongue of land, meaning a long, narrow piece of land. Whether by *cloven* we are to understand that each tongue was cloven, or that the luminous body was cloven, or separated into several tongues, is a question of more nicety than practical importance. ¶ *And it sat, &c.* Probably the appearance of flame was first noticed by the spectators, flashing or sparkling, and changing its position, until at length it became fixed on the heads of the apostles, and perhaps others. There seems a peculiar propriety in the shape here assumed, inasmuch as it was significant of the immediate effect wrought on the apostles by this outpouring of the Spirit; for they forthwith used their tongues in uttering languages which they had never learned. In like manner, the Spirit took the form of a dove, when it

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

descended on our Lord, Luke iii. 22, emblematic at once of his innocence and his gentleness. It has been questioned, whether this miraculous appearance became fixed on the twelve apostles only, or on some or all of the brethren mentioned in Acts i. 15. I see nothing unreasonable in the supposition that others shared in the gift, though the phrases, "it sat upon each of them," and "they were all filled," need not necessarily be considered applicable to a larger number than the Twelve. However this be, so many as were thus indicated as recipients of power from on high, immediately became capable of speaking languages before unknown to them, as is asserted in the succeeding verse; and of performing miracles, as is declared in the succeeding chapter.

4. *They were all.* The whole number upon whom the flaming tongues rested, whether twelve or more. ¶ *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* It has been argued that this phrase denotes an absolute fulness, as if every faculty of their souls was pervaded by the Holy Spirit, and brought entirely under its influence. But this interpretation cannot be admitted here, because it is certain that they did not at once perceive all truth, which it was the office of the Spirit to impart, or become altogether pure and righteous, as they must, if they had been thoroughly purified by it. Peter did not understand that the Gentiles were interested in the gospel, until he was miraculously instructed; and the eleven reproved him for preaching it to Cornelius and his household. See Acts x. xi. And, at a still later period, Paul withstood Peter to his face, for blameworthy conduct. Gal. ii. 11—14. The truth is, to be filled with the Holy Ghost, as applied to men in the present life, implies no more than that they are under the influence of that divine Spirit which will illuminate their minds and purify their hearts gradually, until they shall become perfect in a purer world. In this circumscribed sense, the word *filled* is ordinarily used in the scriptures. "They were filled with wrath," Luke iv. 28; that is, they were very angry. "They were filled with fear," Luke v. 26; that is, they were awed by the display of power

which they had witnessed. "They were filled with water," Luke viii. 23; that is, there was much water in their boats. "Ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled," John vi. 26; that is, their appetite was satisfied. But, in this particular case, it is not probable that the ordinary operation of the Holy Ghost is indicated at all. The reference seems solely to the miraculous powers with which the apostles were endowed, enabling them to speak foreign tongues intelligibly, to heal the sick, and to perform other mighty works; enabling them also to obtain clearer conceptions of their Master and his kingdom, and to remember his instructions, and communicate them accurately to mankind. See note on Acts i. 5. ¶ *And began to speak with other tongues.* Or, in foreign languages. Their own was a rugged dialect of the Syro-Chaldaic; but they immediately became able to address the inhabitants of many foreign nations, ver. 9—11, each in his own vernacular language. This was a manifest miracle, and forcibly arrested the attention of the multitude. Many impostors have pretended to speak in unknown tongues, and have uttered gibberish and uncouth sounds which no mortal could understand. None, however, except the apostles and their associates in the promulgation of Christianity, have been enabled so to speak languages which they had never learned, as to be understood distinctly by their hearers. A doubly beneficial effect resulted from this miracle. It convinced the multitude that the apostles acted under the divine guidance; it enabled the apostles, also, to preach the gospel to foreigners effectually, when otherwise all communication of ideas between them would have been difficult, if not impossible. ¶ *As the Spirit gave them utterance.* The Spirit suggested the matter of discourse, and imparted the power to communicate ideas in divers languages.

5. *There were dwelling at Jerusalem, &c.* This phrase is probably intended to include such as had assembled at the feast of Pentecost from various regions, making Jerusalem their temporary abode, and those also who had forsaken their former homes, and fixed their residence at Jerusalem, under the impression that the Messiah was about to

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

appear, and establish a temporal kingdom. ¶ *Jews*. Those who were Jews by descent, though probably not born in Judea, ver. 8; including also those who were called Jews, being proselytes to Judaism, though foreigners by blood and birth, ver. 10. Both classes seem to be comprehended under the general name of Jews. ¶ *Devout men*. Devotional in spirit, and circumspect in conduct. ¶ *Out of every nation under heaven*. An hyperbolic expression, denoting many nations, which are named more particularly in ver. 9—11. The Jews had become widely scattered among the nations of the earth. Scarcely a commercial community existed, where some of this race might not be found. And, wherever they went, two principles chiefly engrossed their attention; namely, profit by traffic, and the making of proselytes to their religion. They had many synagogues in foreign lands, and they had induced many of the heathen to renounce idolatry and embrace Judaism. These various colonies were represented by delegations at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost.

6. *When this was noised abroad*. When intelligence of the miraculous sound and appearance, and the amazing power bestowed on the apostles, was circulated through Jerusalem. It was about the hour of morning prayer; but the vast multitude then in Jerusalem might not be expected to present themselves before the Lord at the same moment. Or, we may suppose, the apostles and brethren, if at the temple, were in some of the courts, apart from the multitude; in which case, intelligence of what had occurred was communicated to those who had assembled for worship, but were occupying other courts. ¶ *Multitude came together*. There was a general gathering of the people. Thousands thronged around the apostles, that they might see and hear for themselves. It is not stated

7 And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and

whether the luminous appearance continued visible on the apostles' heads. But the result of the heavenly gift remained manifest; and they continued speaking in foreign languages. Probably, during this exciting period, some of the number spake one language, some another; for the inhabitants of fifteen different regions are said to have heard in their own language, or dialect, what was uttered by the apostles. ¶ *Confounded*. Astonished, amazed, at such a display of divine power. ¶ *Own language*. Literally, own dialect. It often occurs that different dialects of the same language are so unlike, that a person familiar with one can scarcely understand the other. Yet with such accuracy did the apostles utter the different languages and peculiar dialects spoken by all these strangers in Jerusalem, that each understood them without the slightest difficulty. Hence their surprise.

7. *Galileans*. What increased the amazement of the multitude was the fact, that the apostles were not ripe and polished scholars, or even dwellers in Jerusalem, where superior advantages were enjoyed for the attainment of knowledge; but they were natives of Galilee, a province held in derision by the Jews, on account of the uncouth manners and dialect of its inhabitants. To call a man a Galilean was, among the Jews, an expression of utter contempt. John vii. 52. The former ignorance of the apostles rendered their present capability the more conspicuous and astonishing. What is true in this particular case holds equally true in regard to their unparalleled success in evangelizing the world. Nothing short of the divine aid could have enabled such men to perform such a work.

8. *Our own tongue, wherein we were born*. The language or dialect spoken where we were born; in other words, our native language. This phrase de-

Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and

notes that the speakers, though of Jewish descent, were not born in Judea, but in other provinces or nations where their ancestors had fixed their residence. See note on ver. 5.

9. *Parthians*. Jews or proselytes, who dwelt in Parthia. To convey a more distinct idea of the gift of tongues, the historian enumerates some of the various nations whose representatives were then in Jerusalem, beginning at the north-eastern of those nations, and proceeding westwardly and southwardly. Parthia is understood to have once been a province of Media, forming the north-eastern portion of that kingdom. It is situated near the south-eastern border of the Caspian Sea, and has Aria on the east, Caramania on the south, and Media on the west. It became a separate kingdom about the year 250 B.C., and remained so until about A.D. 225, when it was subdued, and became a part of the Persian empire. The Parthians were formidable warriors, distinguished for the use of the bow. So adroitly did they discharge their arrows, when appearing to retreat, that they were scarcely less dangerous when flying than when attacking. This feat of dexterity has long since passed into a proverb. Some have supposed the Parthians to have descended from the ancient Scythians. Their language was substantially the Persian. ¶ *Medes*. The Medes are often named in the Old Testament, in connection with the Persians. Media was a very ancient kingdom. About the year 550 B.C., Persia became incorporated with this kingdom; and thenceforward, for many years, the laws of the Medes and Persians, and their annals, are found mentioned together. See Esth. i. 19; x. 2; Dan. vi. 8, 12. Media was bounded east by Parthia, south by Elam, a province of Persia, west by Assyria, north-west by Armenia, and north by the Caspian Sea. It was somewhat larger than the present kingdom of Spain, and was a very fertile country. Its capital was Ecbatana; Judith i. 1. It is said that, during the Babylonish captivity, many Jews inhabited this country, and preferred to remain when their brethren were reinstated in Judea: perhaps those mentioned in the text were their descendants. ¶ *Elamites*. The inhabitants

of Elam, a province of Persia, situated south of Media, west of Caramania, north of Persia, and east of Assyria. Its capital was Susa, or Shushan. Dan. viii. 2. The Elamites are said to have descended from Elam, the son of Shem. Gen. x. 22. In Gen. xiv. 1—4, Cherdorlaomer, king of Elam, is named as a powerful monarch, to whom several neighboring kings were subject. ¶ *Mesopotamia*. This province, called Padan-Aram in Gen. xxviii. 2 (comp. xxiv. 10, 15), was bounded north by Armenia, east by Assyria, south by Chaldea and Babylonia, and west by Syria. Its name signifies, between the rivers, in reference to its situation between the Tigris and the Euphrates. It was the scene of many events recorded in the Old Testament; being the first dwelling-place of Noah and his family, after the deluge; and the birth-place of Abraham, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, and the twelve sons of Jacob. The language spoken in this province was the Chaldaic. "Assyria, Chaldea, Mesopotamia, Syria, Coelosyria, to inquire no further; all these spake that Chaldee language, so certainly that there needeth not the least pains to prove it. And Judea was fallen into the same tongue now also; but with so much difference from the Mesopotamian, Syriac, or Chaldee, that here it is nominated as a language distinct. And this sheweth the reason of the phrase, 'dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judea,' that he might distinguish the Syriac of Judea and of Chaldea asunder; that those that dwelt in Mesopotamia heard their Syriac, and those that dwelt in Judea heard theirs."—*Lightfoot*. ¶ *In Judea*. It has been thought singular by many, that the historian should here mention Judea, as if it were strange that the apostles could be understood by the native Jews. Some have suggested, to obviate this supposed difficulty, that the text is corrupted, and should be read India; others have hinted that the difference between the dialect of Judea and that of Galilee was so great as to require a miracle to enable an inhabitant of one to speak in the dialect of the other. *Lightfoot*, before quoted, suggests that Judea was named, because its language differed from that of Mesopotamia, though both had a common origin; and this certainly seems as

## Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

reasonable as any other *special* interpretation. But the following *general* interpretation bears the marks of common sense, which, in a vast majority of cases, will be found to express the truth:—"This is one of the many instances in which commentators have perplexed themselves to very little purpose. Luke recorded this as any other historian would have done. In running over the languages which they spoke, he enumerated this as a matter of course, not that it was remarkable simply that they should speak the language of Judea, but that they should speak *so many*, meaning about the same by it as if he had said, they spoke every language in the world. Just as if a similar miracle were to occur at this time among an assembly of native Englishmen and foreigners. In describing it, nothing would be more natural than to say, they spoke French, and German, and Spanish, and *English*, and Italian, &c. In this there would be nothing remarkable, except that they spoke *so many* languages."—*Barnes*. ¶ *Cappadocia*. "A region of Asia, adjoining Pontus, Armenia, Phrygia, and Galatia (Acts ii. 9; 1 Pet. i. 1), between the Halys, the Euphrates, and the Euxine. Ptolemy mentions the Cappadocians, and derives their name from a river, Cappadox."—*Calmet*. The inhabitants of this region were regarded by the ancients as notoriously wicked, and the preëminence was given them in the proverb, to beware of the three C's—Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Crete. After the establishment of Christianity in this province, it produced some eminent advocates of the faith, such as Gregory Nyssen, and Basil the Great. The language anciently spoken in this province is not known with certainty: some have, however, supposed it to be a mixture of Greek and Syriac. ¶ *Pontus*. "A province in Asia Minor, having the Euxine Sea north, Cappadocia south, Paphlagonia and Galatia west, and the Lesser Armenia and Colchis east. It is thought that Peter preached here, because he addresses his First Epistle to the faithful of this and of the neighboring provinces."—*Calmet*. This is named, Acts xviii. 2, as the birth-place of Aquila, who, having resided in Italy, went to Corinth, and there entertained

## 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in

and assisted the apostle Paul. ¶ *Asia*. The nations and provinces, previously named, were parts of Asia. The word would seem therefore to be used here in a restricted sense. It sometimes denotes the whole continent; sometimes, what is elsewhere called Asia Minor; and sometimes, the portion styled Proconsular Asia, eastward of the Ægean Sea, of which Ephesus was the capital; in which last-named sense it seems to be used here. In this region were the seven churches of Asia, Rev. i. 4; and the language here spoken was the Greek.

10. *Phrygia*. A province in Asia Minor, bounded north-east by Galatia, east by Lycaonia, south-east by Pisidia, south-west by Caria, west by Lydia, and northerly by Bithynia. It is named in Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23. Probably a dialect of the Greek was spoken in this province. ¶ *Pamphylia*. A province bounded south by the Mediterranean, west by Lycia, north by Pisidia, and east by Cilicia. It is named in Acts xiii. 13; xiv. 24; xv. 38; xxvii. 5. Here also the Greek language was spoken, in less or greater purity. ¶ *Egypt*. A country in Africa, often mentioned in the Old Testament. In this place, the children of Israel were long in bondage; and they departed from it under the most impressive circumstances. Signs and wonders having been wrought in vain by the hand of Moses, the Lord destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians, led his chosen people through the Red Sea dry-shod, and overwhelmed Pharaoh and his host, who pursued them. This country was bounded by Arabia on the east, Ethiopia on the south, Libya on the west, and the Mediterranean Sea on the north. The language spoken was anciently the Coptic; now, the Arabic. Many Jews dwelt in Egypt; and here was made the first translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, called the Septuagint. ¶ *Parts of Libya about Cyrene*. Libya was a country of Africa, west of Egypt, and bordering on the north, upon the Mediterranean. This country now passes under the general name of Barbary. Cyrene was one of its principal divisions, and was sometimes called Pentapolis from the five principal cities embraced in it. See note on Matt. xxvii. 32. ¶ *Strangers of Rome*.

Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

That is, Romans who were in Jerusalem, to attend the feast, or for other purposes. Rome is a city in Italy, the capital of a nation which once attained universal empire, political and ecclesiastical. The nation is now comparatively weak, and the city fallen into decay. Its political power is inconsiderable, except through the influence of its ecclesiastical supremacy over the papal church. In the apostolic age, as Josephus testifies, the Jews had eight synagogues in Rome. The language spoken by the Romans was the Latin. ¶ *Jews*. The descendants of Jacob, whether born in Judea or elsewhere. It is remarkable of this race, that, in all their dispersions and wanderings, they kept themselves from intermarriage with the Gentiles, and preserved their name as a distinct race. ¶ *Proselytes*. Converts from idolatry to Judaism. See note on Matt. xxiii. 15. The phrase, Jews and proselytes, here used, seems designed to apply, not only to the strangers of Rome, but also to all the other classes of men before mentioned. Of all these, there had assembled at Jerusalem many representatives, embracing Jews by birth, and Jews by adoption, or proselytes, who, by conforming to the requirements of the law, were admitted to a less or greater participation of Jewish privileges.

11. *Cretes*. Inhabitants of Crete, now called Candia, an island in the Mediterranean Sea. Its ancient inhabitants were noted for their falsehood and deceit. See Tit. i. 12, 13. This country was united with Cappadocia and Cilicia, in the proverb mentioned in the note on ver. 9. A Christian church was early established here, of which Titus was appointed overseer, to "set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city." Tit. i. 5. The language here spoken was probably the Greek. ¶ *Arabians*. "Arabia is a considerable country of Western Asia, lying south and south-east of Judea. It extends fifteen hundred miles from north to south, and twelve hundred from east to west. On the north it is bounded by part of Syria, on the east by the Persian Gulf and

the Euphrates, on the south by the Arabian Sea and the Straits of Babelmandel, and on the west by the Red Sea. Arabia is distinguished by geographers into three parts, Arabia Deserta, Petraea, and Felix."—*Calmet*. The desert, wherein the Israelites wandered for the space of forty years, was in Arabia. Many references are made to Arabia in the scriptures, and probably many Jews dwelt there. The language spoken by the inhabitants was the Arabic. It was in this country that Mahomet proclaimed his doctrine, in the early part of the seventh century, and imposed it on his countrymen by the power of the sword. ¶ *Speak in our tongues*. Or, in our languages. It is supposed that the historian here enumerates as many as seven or eight different languages, besides different dialects of the same languages. Indeed, some have supposed the enumeration to embrace all the distinct languages then spoken under heaven. It is evident, from the whole narrative, that the apostles were enabled to speak, and did speak, every language used by all who were then assembled in Jerusalem. No one found any difficulty in understanding what they said. And it was this marvellous power which excited such astonishment and amazement; and well it might; for nothing less than a miracle, wrought by divine power, could have given this ability. There was no room for deception here; for witnesses were present, competent to decide, and who did decide, that the languages spoken were not such gibberish as is sometimes styled an unknown tongue, but living languages, familiar to their ears from childhood: that is, Arabians could testify concerning the purity of the Arabic spoken; Egyptians, of the Coptic; Cretans, of the Greek; Romans, of the Latin; Medes, of the Persian; and so of the others. This miracle not only enabled the apostles to address the multitude, each in his own language, but its remote effect was exceedingly important; many, being convinced and converted, proclaimed the truth to their countrymen when they returned home; and hence the knowledge of the gospel was widely spread abroad at once, and

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

the way prepared for the more successful prosecution of their great labor by the apostles. As matter of fact, it is recorded that Christian churches were early established in almost all the regions here named. ¶ *Wonderful works of God.* The heavenly gift was not misimproved; but it was used to proclaim the most important truths concerning God, his Son, and his kingdom.

12. *Amazed — in doubt.* They were in a state of utter perplexity. They could not account for what they witnessed. The picture here drawn is true to the life. On serious minds the first impression produced by such a miracle would be precisely such as is here described.

13. *Others mocking.* Or sneering, or deriding. These persons were probably native Jews, who had previously mocked or derided the Master, and caused him to be crucified. They doubtless knew the apostles as his disciples, and were inclined to discredit them in the estimation of the multitude. ¶ *Full of new wine.* As much as to say, the men are drunk. The phrase might be rendered, quite as properly, full of sweet wine. The idea evidently is, that they were stimulated or excited by wine, or, more plainly, intoxicated. It is known that what was properly called new wine, or must, namely, wine which had never been fermented, would not produce intoxication. But it is said that the ancients were acquainted with a process by which wine might be kept sweet, long after it attained its intoxicating quality by fermentation; and to this kind of wine the text is supposed to refer. This is by no means a solitary instance, in which men have endeavored, by mockery or gross abuse, to destroy the influence of others whom they could not overcome by argument.

14. *Peter.* This apostle here, as elsewhere, takes the lead. Besides the impetuosity of his character, which is sufficient to account for the fact, there seems a peculiar fitness that he should thus publicly and personally commit himself, as a follower of Jesus. He alone, of the apostles, had denied his

13 Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.

14 ¶ But Peter, standing up

Master in the hour of danger. His brethren believed he had repented. Nevertheless, it served to confirm their confidence in him, when, regardless of danger, at the hazard of his life even, he placed himself in the most conspicuous situation, and, on their behalf as on his own, proclaimed the resurrection and exaltation of their Master. It may be observed that the language is mild, considering the temperament of the apostle, and the insulting remark made respecting him and his brethren. He does not return mockery for mockery, nor insult for insult: but his reply is calm, courteous, and manly. This is the more remarkable, as Peter had formerly been by no means distinguished for politeness and urbanity, but was often guilty of impertinence and apparent disrespect even to his Master. See Matt. xvi. 21—23. While therefore we recognise the bold and sanguine Peter, in his assuming the post of danger, in the front of the contest now beginning between the servants of Jesus and their ungodly adversaries, yet, in the character of his address, we recognise another fact, with equal distinctness; namely, that he spake under the direction of a controlling spirit, or as the Spirit gave him utterance, ver. 4. ¶ *Standing up with the eleven.* It is the general opinion, that Peter alone addressed the multitude, and that the eleven stood up with him, in attestation that they concurred in the declarations which he made. Others suppose that all the apostles spake, one in one language, and others in different languages, so that the whole multitude were instructed at once, each in his own dialect; and that only the discourse of Peter is recorded, because it was more particularly addressed to the native Jews, who had been guilty of the enormities here charged upon them. "Reason itself, if the text did not, would readily resolve that it was not Peter alone that converted the three thousand that are mentioned after; but that the rest of the apostles were sharers with him in that work. For if Peter must be held the only orator at this time, then must it needs be granted, that either the three thousand which were converted

with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

were all of one language; or that the one language that he spake seemed to the hearers to be divers tongues; or that he rehearsed the same speech over and over again, in divers languages; any of which to grant, is senseless and ridiculous; and yet, unless we will run upon some of these absurdities, we may not deny that the rest of the twelve preached now as well as Peter."

—*Lightfoot*. It may be observed, on the other hand, that many perhaps were converted by the twelve, before this address of Peter was made to the railing Jews, ver. 4, 11; or, at least, that an impression was made on them, which resulted in their conversion. However this be, our concern is chiefly with the discourse of Peter. ¶ *Ye men of Judea, Native Jews.* ¶ *All ye that dwell at Jerusalem.* Either permanent or temporary inhabitants. This seems designed to include all who had assembled at Jerusalem, from various regions; though, possibly, none could understand him except those who were familiar with the language in common use among the Jews, which was doubtless spoken by Peter, as his discourse was chiefly designed for their benefit. ¶ *Be this known unto you, &c.* This may be understood as a declaration that he would explain this mysterious and perplexing occurrence, if they would listen to him; as a courteous salutation, bespeaking attention. Peter manifested no hesitation or embarrassment; neither did he betray the least alarm at the taunts of the Jews, though he had so recently witnessed the tragical issue of their opposition to Jesus. He was entirely self-possessed, and was ready to discuss the matter calmly and dispassionately, and at the same time with firmness and decision.

15. *These are not drunken, &c.* That is, all who had been speaking with tongues, and who, with himself, were included in the railing accusation. ¶ *Third hour of the day.* Corresponding to nine o'clock in the morning, as we compute time. See note on John i. 39. He first shows the exceeding improbability of their charge. It was not

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,

to be supposed that men would become intoxicated so early in the morning; especially, as it was known to be the custom of the Jews neither to eat nor drink until they had first offered prayers, and it was now the hour of prayer. Lightfoot proves from the Jewish writings, that such was the custom. So universal was this custom, that Peter unhesitatingly appealed to it, to show the groundlessness of the charge.

16. *But this is that, &c.* The charge of drunkenness had been effectually rebutted. But this was not sufficient; it was necessary also to declare the actual cause of the marvellous ability exhibited by the apostles. Hence an appeal was made to the prediction of an inspired prophet. ¶ *That which was spoken by the prophet Joel.* That is, what you now witness is the fulfilment of the prediction by the prophet. The reference is to Joel ii. 29—32. The quotation is not literal; but its substantial accuracy is undeniable. Some suppose the prophecy had primary reference to the events here recorded; others, that it was applied, by accommodation, as often elsewhere, to show that, as such events had been predicted by one of their own prophets, they ought not resort to such an unreasonable method of discrediting them. Perhaps a more correct interpretation may be found between the two extremes. Joel manifestly referred to the times of the Messiah; and many of the terms he used, descriptive of the signs which should precede the great day of the Lord, are almost identical with those which Jesus employed for the same purpose. Hence Peter reminded the Jews that wonders and signs were to be expected, when the Messiah should appear, — and they were even then expecting him. He then assured them that the Messiah had come already, that he had been crucified by them, had risen again, and ascended on high; and that he had bestowed this power on his servants, enabling them to speak with tongues, ver. 33. The prophecy was quoted, therefore, not directly to



17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

account for the special wonder which amazed some and excited derision in others, but as applicable to a much more important event, of which what was now witnessed was one of the results.

17. *In the last days.* This was a common expression among the Jews, to denote the days of the Messiah. The language used by the prophet was, "It shall come to pass afterward." Joel ii. 28. But the Jews themselves understood the two phrases to be equivalent. "Kimchi upon the place hath this note: 'And it shall come to pass after these things, is the same with It shall come to pass in the last days.' We have elsewhere observed, that, by the last days, is to be understood the last days of Jerusalem and the Jewish economy, namely, when the end of the Jewish world drew near. And there would be the less doubt as to this matter, if we would frame a right notion of 'that great and terrible day of the Lord;' that is, the day of his vengeance upon that place and nation." — *Lightfoot.* The Jews, however, mistook the meaning of the prediction, and expected these last days would be days of unequalled prosperity to themselves, and destruction to other nations. ¶ *I will pour out of my spirit,* &c. The Jews were accustomed to this form of speech, as indicating extraordinary endowments, whether physical, mental, or moral. Thus it is written of Samson, "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him (that is, a young lion) as he would have rent a kid." Judg. xiv. 6. Of Bezaleel the Lord said unto Moses, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of timber to set them," &c. Exod. xxxi. 3—5. In these cases, I suppose no one imagines that a person, the third Person in the Trinity, so called, was imparted to Samson, to enable him to slay a lion, or to Bezaleel, to enable him to work

skilfully in gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood. The utmost which can reasonably be understood is, that a divine energy was imparted in the one case, and a divine skill in the other; in other words, that the strength of Samson and the mechanical skill of Bezaleel were miraculously increased. In like manner when a divine moral influence or energy is imparted, the individual is said to have the Spirit of God poured upon him, or to be filled with it. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor," &c. Isa. lxi. 1. Jesus applied this language to himself. Luke iv. 18—21. Many have believed that Jesus was the second Person in the Trinity; but I am not aware that any have regarded him as the second and third also. The meaning is, that all needful divine assistance and grace and wisdom were imparted to him. See note on Luke iv. 18. And we cannot well suppose that the gift of the Spirit to the disciples of Jesus implied any thing more than a similar gift to their Master. Those, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord was poured, were brought more sensibly and effectually under a divine influence, by which their minds were enlightened, and their hearts purified from sinfulness. It is in fact nearly, if not altogether, equivalent to what is elsewhere styled being baptized with the Holy Ghost. See note on Matt. iii. 11. Such is the general idea embraced in the outpouring of the divine spirit. Yet here, as in Acts i. 5, there seems a special reference to certain miraculous endowments, illustrative of what was exhibited in the case of the apostles, ver. 4. See notes on the two passages cited. ¶ *Upon all flesh.* That is, upon all persons. The meaning is, there shall be a general outpouring of the spirit; or its influence shall be widely diffused. The enumeration which follows, in this and the succeeding verse, shows that all classes should partake the blessing. ¶ *Your sons and your daughters.* Your children; the young: this class, as well as others, should feel the divine influence. ¶ *Prophecy.* This word has

18 And on my servants, and on my hand-maids, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the

earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

various significations; it is not confined to the prediction of future events, but denotes also preaching or proclaiming the truth of God, or any other act of speaking under the guidance of the spirit. See notes on Matt. vii. 15; xxvi. 68. ¶ *Visions*. One method by which God anciently communicated his will to men was by vision, that is, by the appearance of events, as realities, before the waking or sleeping eyes of his servants. ¶ *Dreams*. The divine will was sometimes communicated to men in dreams. See note on Matt. i. 20.

18. *Servants — handmaidens*. Male and female slaves were formerly so denominated. And in the original prophecy, these terms were naturally used, to complete the enumeration of the several classes in community. The evident import of the whole is, that the heavenly gift would not be monopolised by any one class; but that it should extend to all. It has been supposed that Peter, in quoting this prophecy, purposely varied its terms, so as by servants and handmaidens to indicate male and female believers in the gospel; for so are believers elsewhere often denominated. The variation noticed is from *the servants to my servants*.

19. *I will show wonders*. Unusual and remarkable events, whether miraculous or not. The wonders here specially denoted are enumerated in ver. 20. ¶ *Signs*. Namely, "Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke," as immediately specified. "Blood is commonly used as an emblem of slaughter or of battle. Fire is also an image of war, or the conflagration of towns and dwellings in time of war. The word vapor means commonly an exhalation from the earth, &c., easily moved from one place to another. Here it means rising columns or pillars of smoke, and is another image of the calamities of war, the smoke rising from burning towns. It has almost always been customary in war to burn the towns of an enemy, and to render him as helpless as possi-

ble. Hence the calamities denoted here are those represented by such scenes."—*Burns*. The similarity between this prediction and that of our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 6—8, is remarkable. See note on ver. 20. In the absence of proof to the contrary, it may be safely concluded that the reference is the same in both cases.

20. *The sun shall be turned, &c.* See notes on Matt. xxiv. 29—31. Such figures often occur in the Old Testament to represent great changes or revolutions in political or religious affairs, or both. Our Lord indicated the overturning of the Jewish religion and nation, by almost precisely the same figures, in the place already cited. ¶ *Great and notable day of the Lord*. The word *epiphane* (ἐπιφανῆ), here rendered *notable*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It signifies apparent, visible, illustrious, or, more literally, shining forth. This great and notable day may unquestionably be regarded as the same which was predicted by our Lord; the day when he would overthrow the political and ecclesiastical institutions of the Jews, and establish the kingdom of heaven. The signs which should precede this remarkable change are strikingly similar in both cases; and no other event, which had been or would be witnessed by the persons addressed, can be supposed to correspond with the predictions. "The day of Jerusalem's destruction; which was forty years after this, as was observed before; so that all these gifts, and all the effusion of the Spirit, that were to be henceforward, were to be within the time betwixt this Pentecost and Jerusalem destroyed. — The phrase 'the last days,' used here, and in divers other places, is not to be taken for the last days of the world, but for the last days of Jerusalem, the destruction of which, and the rejection of the Jews, is reputed the end of that old world; and the coming in of the Gentiles under the gospel is as a new world, and is accordingly called 'a new heaven and a new earth.'"—*Lightfoot*.

21 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by

In this interpretation, most commentators agree. See note on ver. 33.

21. *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, &c.* That is, shall call on the Lord; for the name of the Lord is but a Hebraism for the Lord himself. By calling on the Lord, we are to understand something more than uttering his name, or invoking his assistance and protection. See Matt. vii. 21. Effectual calling implies veneration and obedience. The phrase is equivalent to, Whosoever shall love, reverence, and obey the Lord, shall be saved. The salvation here indicated was preservation from the temporal calamities which befell the ungodly, at the time denoted by the "great and notable day of the Lord," ver. 20. See note on Matt. xxiv. 13. There is a spiritual salvation connected with faith and worship, and obedience to the divine law. But no reference is here made to that kind of salvation, as is manifest from the general subject of discourse. So evident is this fact, that it is admitted by most commentators. "Shall be saved; in Hebrew, shall be *delivered*, that is, from impending calamities. When they threaten, and God is coming forth to judge them, it shall be that those who are characterized as those who call on the Lord shall be delivered. This is equally true at all times. It is remarkable that no Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Though more than a million of the Jews perished, yet the followers of Christ who were there, having been warned by him, when they saw the signs of the Romans approaching, withdrew to Elia, and were preserved."—*Barnes*. This writer, to be sure, thinks that "so it shall be in the day of judgment." But whatever he may consider illustrated by this passage, he admits that it had its fulfilment when the Christians were preserved from the terrible calamities which befell the Jews, when their city was destroyed.

22. *Ye men of Israel.* Descendants of Jacob. This phrase may comprehend those Jews who were inhabitants of foreign lands and strangers in Jerusalem, as well as native citizens. But the character of Peter's address indi-

cates that he had special reference to those who were politically members of the Jewish commonwealth; for they, chiefly, had been instrumental in procuring the crucifixion of Jesus, and they were peculiarly exposed to the divine judgments. ¶ *Hear these words.* Peter here earnestly asks their attention to the third branch of his address. He had first shown the folly of the charge of drunkenness, by referring to the early hour of the day; when, according to a known custom of the Jews (unhappily too much neglected in later times), it could not be supposed that any intoxicating drink had been taken. He then called their attention to a prediction of one of their own prophets, that signs and wonders and marvellous events should be witnessed in the "last days," preceding the "great and notable day of the Lord;" and therefore they ought not to slight the warning, nor be surprised when these wonders began to appear. He now proceeds to show them that the great day of the Lord is at hand, and that what they had just witnessed should be regarded as a portion of the wonders predicted, and as the effect of that outpouring of the Spirit, of which the prophet had spoken. And he assured them that the same Jesus, whom they had crucified, had risen, and would soon come in judgment. ¶ *Jesus of Nazareth.* Possibly Peter used this descriptive epithet, with reference to the former sneering remarks of the Jews; for they had a most sovereign contempt for Nazareth and its inhabitants. See note on John i. 46. As if he had said, This man whom ye so despise as a Galilean and Nazarene, God hath manifested by miracles to be his chosen servant; and he whom you crucified has become your judge. ¶ *A man approved of God.* However highly Peter believed his Master was exalted above others, by gifts and graces, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it is manifest, from this form of speech, that he did not regard him as the eternal and supreme God. His purpose was not to depreciate any of the excellencies or the dignity of our Lord's character, but to present it in its proper light, that the Jews might

miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know :

be forcibly impressed with a sense of its eminence and purity, and of their own wickedness and guilt. ¶ *Approved of God*, &c. Either demonstrated, by his works, to have the *approval* of God as a chosen and commissioned servant ; or, as some render it, *proved* to you to be a man from God. ¶ *By miracles, and wonders, and signs*. This may be specially interpreted to mean the miracles which Jesus wrought, the wonders which attended his birth and death, and the signs of his Messiahship afforded by all these and other circumstances. But perhaps a more general interpretation should be preferred ; regarding the phrase as a common figure of speech, which, by an accumulation of terms, is designed to express an idea more forcibly. In this sense, Peter may be understood to refer generally to the miracles by which the divine mission of Jesus was demonstrated ; such as controlling the elements, healing the sick, giving strength to the infirm, sight to the blind, and life to the dead. To these miracles Jesus uniformly and confidently appealed, in proof that he was a messenger from heaven, the Son of God. See notes on John x. 37, 38 ; xv. 24. And they who reject the miracles, as proof of his Messiahship, both surrender an incontrovertible if not an indispensable evidence of the fact, and fail to obey him, whom they profess to serve ; for he required men to judge of his character upon the evidence afforded by his works. ¶ *Which God did by him*. The original power is here, as elsewhere, ascribed to God. Thus did Jesus himself uniformly acknowledge that he wrought miracles and performed mighty works by the power of the Father communicated to him. John v. 19 ; xiv. 10. ¶ *In the midst of you*. The alleged miracles of Jesus were not performed in secrecy, but in public ; not in a "corner," but in the open day ; in the synagogues, in the streets, in the temple, and in the presence of multitudes, as well as in private dwellings, and on board of ships. ¶ *As ye yourselves also know*. It was an undeniable fact. The miracles were performed so publicly and openly, even in presence of adversaries who were

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and

watching to detect any imposition, that the fact was well known in Jerusalem and various parts of Judea and Galilee. Probably many were present, besides the disciples, who had witnessed some of these miracles ; and most of the multitude may be supposed to have had such authentic intelligence concerning them, as to have no occasion to doubt their reality. This portion of the address, however, was specially directed to the dwellers in Judea ; and to them it might well be said that they *knew* the facts alleged by the apostle.

23. *Him, being delivered*. Rather, *delivered up*. The meaning is, he was delivered up to death, not from it. There may be an allusion here to the fact, that Jesus was delivered by Judas to the priests, by them to the Romans, by Pilate to Herod, and by Herod to Pilate again, and finally to the officers for crucifixion. But the more obvious and principal idea is, that he was delivered or given up by the Father into the hands of wicked men. ¶ *By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*. When God sent his Son into the world, nothing pertaining to his mission or its results was a matter of chance or contingency. Every circumstance was clearly and distinctly foreseen, and absolutely determined, by the Supreme Ruler. So much is here distinctly affirmed ; and any contrary supposition would be manifestly inconsistent with a just conception of an omniscient and omnipotent God. Accordingly, ages before the advent of our Lord, the prophets were inspired to predict, not only his ministry, but his death, and many of the circumstances connected with it. See Matt. xxvi. 24 ; Luke xxii. 22 ; John xix. 23, 24, 28—30 ; Acts iii. 18. Perhaps this fact may have been mentioned by Peter, to show the futility of one allegation of the Jews ; namely, that Jesus was not the true Messiah, because he had died ; for they supposed the Messiah would live and reign on earth for ever. Hence he called their attention to the fact, that all which had occurred was according to the divine counsel, and foretold in their own scriptures. And therefore, although they had done wickedly, and had

by wicked hands have crucified and slain :

24 Whom God hath raised up,

no intention to fulfil the divine purposes, Acts iii. 17, 18, yet they had in fact accomplished what God had determined and his prophets predicted ; and their objection was utterly unfounded.

¶ *By wicked hands, &c.* Some refer this to the Roman soldiers, by whom Jesus was actually crucified ; as if the meaning were, Ye have crucified him by the instrumentality of heathen, or wicked, or lawless hands. I doubt whether it was the intention of Peter thus to absolve the Jews, even by implication, from any portion of their guilt. It seems much more natural to understand him as charging the guilt upon the persons to whom it belonged. The Roman soldiers were under strict military discipline, bound to obey their officers, and not morally accountable for any thing which they did under command. But *they* were guilty, who persecuted the friend of sinners, and whose enmity could not be quenched by any thing except his blood ; and these were Jews. Upon them the apostle charges this guilt ; assuring them that they had *wickedly* crucified Jesus, notwithstanding this was an event foreseen and determined by God. He was righteous, and they wicked ; because He designed the event for good, but they accomplished it for evil, designing only to gratify their wicked passions. See Gen. i. 20. Thus, when God designed to administer a righteous chastisement to the Jews, he employed the king of Assyria as the rod by which to execute it ; and still it was consistent with his justice to “punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks ;” because that king had no intention to perform the will of the Most High, neither did his heart think so ; but it was “in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.” See Isa. x. 5—19. So in this case : it was not the purpose of the Jews to fulfil the prophecies, or to accomplish the will of God ; but, under the influence of unholty passions, they had crucified aim who came to save them. They were therefore guilty ; and upon those who remained impenitent a most awful and memorable judgment was ad-

having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

ministered, not long after they had thus filled the cup of their iniquity. Let no man flatter himself that he is guiltless, because God rules the world ; for guilt results from an evil design.

24. *Whom God hath raised up.* The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the true seal of his ministry. It is altogether incredible that God should perform such a miracle, to enable an impostor to deceive the people. Jesus had foretold his own death and resurrection, while professing to be the Son of God. He died, and God raised him up, according to his word ; and thus acknowledged him to be truly his Son and his accredited Messenger. See Rom. i. 4. On this foundation the apostles erected the superstructure of Christianity : their first effort was to prove that Jesus, who had been dead, was alive. His Sonship being thus established, faith in his words might justly be demanded and expected. Connected with this, was a special object to be accomplished by convincing the people that Jesus had risen, which is disclosed in ver. 33. But the great leading object was to convince men that Jesus was the true Messiah, by proving to them that he died and rose again ; 1 Cor. xv. 3—8 ; and to aid in this special work was an additional apostle elected, namely, “to be a witness—of his resurrection.” Acts i. 22. ¶ *Having loosed the pains of death.* “Rather, loosed the bonds of the grave, that is, of death. The Hebrew word signifies both *bonds* and *pains* ; and therefore the LXX. in Ps. xviii. 5, have made use of the word *ōdines* (ὠδίνες), *pains*, though it is plain, from what follows, that *bonds* are meant. The words there are, according to our English translation, ‘The sorrows (marg. bonds) of hell compassed me about, the snares of death prevented me.’ And the same is found in Ps. cxvi. 3.”—*Pearce*. We cannot well understand the word *pains* in its ordinary sense, as the pain of death ceased when life became extinct, and it needed not a resurrection to accomplish so much ; nor will any one pretend that Jesus endured pain between his death and resurrection. Hence the propriety of adopting the word *bonds* or

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

*bands*, instead of *pains*. The idea is, that the power of death was overcome, death being personified; that the bands by which he held the body of Jesus inanimate were broken, and life was restored. ¶ *Because it was not possible*, &c. Probably, there was no natural impossibility in the case; for a body subject to death might also be subject to the natural consequences of death, namely, decomposition. But the apostle explained his meaning. He referred to a moral impossibility. The predictions which he immediately cited, manifestly showed that it was not consistent with the purposes of God, that Jesus should remain under the power of death. It was therefore just as impossible that death should hold dominion over him, as it was that the determinate purpose of God should be defeated.

25. *For David speaketh*, &c. The passage quoted in this and the following three verses is Ps. xvi. 8—11, and is according to the Septuagint, with a single slight variation. ¶ *Concerning him*. That is, concerning Jesus. The apostle argues, ver. 29—31, that David could not have spoken thus concerning himself, and that his language had direct reference to that same Jesus whom the Jews had crucified. ¶ *I foresaw the Lord always before my face*, &c. "This is an unhappy translation. To foresee the Lord always before us conveys no idea, though it may be a literal translation of the passage. The word means to *foresee*, and then to *see before us*, that is, as present with us, to regard as being near. It thus implies, to put confidence in one; to rely on him, or expect assistance from him. This is its meaning here."—*Barnes*. "Rather, I saw the Lord always before my face; that is, I have set the Lord always before me."—*Pearce*. "I set the Lord before me at all times."—*Noyes*. Either of these versions expresses with sufficient distinctness the idea of confidence inspired by a realizing sense of the divine presence and protection. ¶ *He is on my right hand*, &c. After the manner of Hebrew parallels, the same idea is repeated, in different terms. The near-

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope:

ness, the absolute presence of God, indicated by being on the right hand, was a sufficient reason why no real or permanent evil need be apprehended. "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." Prov. xvi. 20. This idea is very beautifully expressed in the fortieth Psalm. Any child of God, who can thus realize his heavenly Father's presence, may meet with calm fortitude all the trials of life, confidently trusting that all will be over-ruled for his highest spiritual good.

26. *Therefore did my heart rejoice*. *Heart* is often put for *person*, in the figurative language of the East; and indeed a similar use of the word is not unusual at the present time. The meaning is, a sense of the divine presence fills me with joy. It was this confidence in the presence of his Father which enabled Jesus to endure the trials and persecutions, the bitter mockeries, and even the pains of death, which he encountered at the hands of his adversaries. It enabled him to triumph, even in his hour of most bitter agony, and to say, with a full heart, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Luke xxii. 42. The same sustaining power, enabling him to rejoice even in tribulation, may be enjoyed by every disciple of Christ, in proportion to the faithfulness with which he copies the example of his Master, and realizes the presence and kindness of his heavenly Father. ¶ *My tongue was glad*. "Hebrew, *My glory or my honor exults*."—*Barnes*. "My spirit rejoiceth."—*Noyes*. This is another instance of the Hebrew parallel. The joy of the heart and the gladness of the tongue are but different forms of speech, expressive of the same general idea; namely, that state of mind which the apostle describes as resulting from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; in whom believing, we "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." 1 Pet. i. 8. Such joy our Master experienced, through a consciousness of his Father's presence and love; and such joy becomes the portion of his disciples, when they can fully realize the same blessed truth. ¶ *Moreover, also*, &c. In addition to all such joy.

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

¶ *My flesh shall rest in hope.* The body is here personified, and represented as lying down in the grave, with confident hope of a resurrection, as is manifest from what follows. This phrase has the same figurative character as the preceding. As joy is ascribed to the heart, and gladness to the tongue, so is hope ascribed to the body. The evident meaning is, I will rejoice in the presence of God while I live, and meet the trials of life unmoved; and moreover, in addition to this, when death comes, I will resign my body to the grave, in cheerful and confident hope of a resurrection. Such, the evangelist assures us, was the state of mind cherished by our Lord. However much his sensitive spirit might shrink from the anguish which he knew awaited him, he never doubted that God would raise him from the dead, before decomposition should take place in his body, as is expressed in ver. 27. Uniformly, when he forewarned his disciples that he must be put to death at Jerusalem, he assured them he should be raised again on the third day. The confidence which the Psalmist prophetically expressed in his name was fully enjoyed and exemplified by Christ, when he appeared in his own person. Although his disciples may not expect their bodies to be in like manner preserved from corruption, yet they may cherish the most unwavering hope of a resurrection to immortal life. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thess. iv. 14.

27. *Because thou wilt not leave my soul, &c.* This is the reason why our Lord was able to surrender his life: he was confident it would be restored. He knew in whom he trusted; and he did not hesitate to commit himself unto God. The word *psuchē* (ψυχή), here translated *soul*, has various significations. See note on Matt. xvi. 26. In this case, it may mean the body alone, though this is a very unusual signification of the term; \* or it may mean the

whole person: but it cannot mean the spiritual part of man, in distinction from the body; for this is not committed to the grave, and is in no danger of decomposition or corruption. "There is no clear instance in which it is applied to the soul in its *separate* state, or disjoined from the body."—*Barnes*. ¶ *In hell.* This word has unhappily acquired a signification altogether different from its original meaning; and the same is true in regard to the Greek *hades* (ᾍδης), from which it is here translated. See note on Matt. xi. 23. The Hebrew *Sheol*, answering to the Greek *Hades*, usually denoted the state of the dead, without special reference to place, or to the condition of the departed, whether happy or miserable. It is possible, that in this place the phrase may mean, Thou wilt not leave my body in the grave; but, as before remarked, this is a very unusual signification of the word *psuchē*, or soul; and, it may be added, *sheol*, or *hades*, as used in the Old Testament, seldom if ever, is applied exclusively to the grave, or sepulchre. The idea of the grave was naturally associated with the state of the dead, for there the dead body was deposited; yet the Jews seem to have designated by the word *sheol* the state of the dead, rather than the place where the body rested. Hence, a more probable interpretation of this passage is, Thou wilt not leave me in the state of the dead; in other words, Thou wilt restore my life. The general idea undoubtedly is that of a resurrection from death to life; and the succeeding words indicate that this resurrection should speedily follow death. This was accomplished in our Lord, who was raised on the third day, having tenanted the sepulchre not much longer than thirty hours; namely, about six hours at the close of the sixth day, the twenty-four hours of the seventh day, and but a very short time after the commencement of the first day, of the week. See note on Matt. xxvii. 64. ¶ *Neither wilt thou suffer.* Or, permit. ¶ *Thine Holy One.* The word here

\* The only instances in the Old Testament, I believe, where the Hebrew *Nephish* or the Greek *Psuchē* is applied to the body exclusively, are the following; in all which, it will

be observed, it means a *dead* body. Leviticus xix 28; xxi. 1. 11; xxii. 4; Numbers v. 2; vi. 6, 11; ix. 6, 7, 10; xix. 13; Hag-gai ii. 13.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

used indicates one who is set apart for a holy use, or one who is free from the contamination of sin. In either sense, or in both, it is applicable to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was specially designated and sent as the Messenger of God and the Saviour of the world, and who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Heb. vii. 26. ¶ *See corruption.* That is, become corrupted or decomposed. This form of expression is common in the Hebrew writings. Thus, to see leath or to taste of death, is to die; to see good, is to be prosperous and happy; to see life, is to live, or to enjoy life, either temporal or spiritual, as the case may be. So to see corruption is to become corrupted; namely, by putrefaction in the grave. This verse furnishes another instance of the Hebrew parallel. The same idea, substantially, is expressed in both members; except that the latter implies the speedy accomplishment of what is declared in general terms in the former; that is, that not only should a resurrection be granted, but it should be accomplished before the body was decomposed or corrupted. All this had its literal fulfilment in our Lord.

28. *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life.* Or, as the passage is translated, in the Old Testament, from the Hebrew, "Thou wilt show me the path of life." Ps. xvi. 11. As the former part of the prediction has reference to the death of Christ, this probably refers to his resurrection, and is equivalent to, Thou wilt bestow life on me. ¶ *Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.* That is, with thy face or thy presence. This probably refers to the joy of our Lord, when he ascended from the earth to the more immediate presence of God. In a very important sense, God is everywhere present; yet Jesus taught that his presence is more sensibly manifested and realized in heaven than on earth. See note on John xiv. 2, 3. To this peculiar presence, and the joy it affords, reference seems here made. The original passage indicates the same fact: "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for ever-

29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead

more." Ps. xvi. 11. This joy was experienced in full measure by our Lord, when, having endured the cross, despising the shame, he rose again, and ascended, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. xii. 2. To this, I suppose, Peter intended expressly to apply the prediction. And we may hope to be partakers of that joy hereafter, when we shall be raised in his image, and shall be made like him. 1 Cor. xv. 49; 1 John iii. 2

29 *Men and brethren.* In commencing his interpretation and application of the prophecy he had quoted, Peter respectfully called the attention of his hearers to his argument. He did not return railing for railing; but notwithstanding they had persecuted and slain his Master, and had just accused him and his associates of being intoxicated, he called them brethren, and manifested his good-will to them in the manner as well as the matter of his address. ¶ *Freely speak.* Or, speak with boldness, plainness, or directness. See note on Acts iv. 13, where the same word occurs. He claimed the right to speak freely and plainly concerning the ancient predictions, and those by whom they were uttered. The character of David was highly regarded by the Jews, and with good reason; for, in his reign, the nation attained the summit of its power and glory. Probably many of them supposed he wrote the sixteenth Psalm concerning himself. Yet Peter claimed the right to show, that, however exalted was his character, as a temporal ruler, he could not have described his own case in this Psalm, but must have referred to a more exalted personage. ¶ *Patriarch.* This word literally signifies the common ancestor of a family, or the founder of a race. In the scriptures, it is most frequently applied to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel; but occasionally to other eminent and highly distinguished individuals. It is applied here as a term of honor, and perhaps with reference to the fact, that Jesus himself was of the family of David, according to the flesh. The same title, in the Greek, is applied to the heads of the principal families of



and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

Israel, 1 Chron. xxiv. 31; and to the twelve sons of Jacob, Acts vii. 8, 9. ¶ *His sepulchre is with us, &c.* An appeal was thus made to the Jews, that David could not have referred to himself in the prediction before quoted; because they had not the slightest doubt of his death and burial, nor the most remote suspicion that his body was ever removed from his sepulchre by a resurrection from the dead. It was the custom of the Jews, as well as of other eastern nations, to bury their dead outside the walls of their cities. Their kings, and a few other very eminent persons, had their sepulchres within the walls. Thus David was buried on Mount Zion, within the city, as appears from 1 Kings ii. 10, and from the testimony of Josephus. His sepulchre was well known to the Jews; and, by the high estimation in which it was held, it was manifest that they supposed it contained whatever remained of his body. They had never pretended that he was raised from the dead. ¶ *Unto this day.* Josephus, the Jewish historian, who lived in the apostolic age, distinctly affirms the continued existence of this sepulchre in Jerusalem. After noticing the death of the patriarch David, he says: "He was buried by his son Solomon, in Jerusalem, with great magnificence, and with all the other funeral pomp which kings used to be buried with. Moreover he had great and immense wealth buried with him; the vastness of which may be easily conjectured at by what I shall now say; for a thousand and three hundred years afterward, Hyrcanus the high priest, when he was besieged by Antiochus, that was called the pious, the son of Demetrius, and was desirous of giving him money to get him to raise the siege and draw off his army, and having no other method of compassing the money, opened one room of David's sepulchre, and took out three thousand talents, and gave part of that sum to Antiochus, and by this means caused the siege to be raised, as we have informed the reader elsewhere. Nay, after him, and that many years, Herod the king opened another room, and took away a great deal of money; and yet neither of them came at the coffins of the kings

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn

themselves; for their bodies were buried under the earth so artfully, that they did not appear even to those that entered into their monuments."—*Jew. Antiq.* b. vii. ch. xv. § 3.

30. *Therefore.* Here we have a legitimate conclusion of the argument. As David was confessedly dead and buried, and it was not pretended that he had risen again, it followed, of course, that he did not speak concerning himself in the prediction quoted, but must have intended or personated some other individual. Who that individual was, Peter proceeds to show. ¶ *Being a prophet.* The word *prophet* here evidently indicates one who foretells future events. The Jews acknowledged David to be such a prophet, and Peter was at this time interpreting one of his predictions. ¶ *Knowing.* Having received a divine assurance. God had so revealed his will to David, that he felt a perfect certainty in his mind, and left a record of that certainty, as appears by what follows. ¶ *That God had sworn with an oath to him.* "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, 35, 36. See also Ps. cxxxii. 11. ¶ *Fruit of his loins.* His posterity. This, in connection with the argument, is a direct assertion that Jesus descended from David, as to the flesh; of course, that his mother Mary was of that family; for Joseph was only the reputed father of Jesus. ¶ *According to the flesh, he would raise up Christ.* This phrase is rejected as spurious by Griesbach and Knapp; and, as it would seem, for good reason; for it is certain the original promise did not contain it. Pearce says, these words are omitted in several MSS. and in the Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, and Ethiopic versions; they are also omitted by some of the ancient Fathers, and in two of the first printed editions of the New Testament, namely, those of Erasmus and Aldus. "This omission is, I think, a right one; and the whole passage may be translated after the following

with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

31 He seeing this before, spake

manner: 'Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, of the fruit of his loins to set upon his throne; and foreseeing that he (God) would raise up Christ, he spake of the resurrection of Christ,' &c. In this translation, the words which Peter quotes as David's are exactly the same with what we read in Ps. cxxii. 11; and the circumstance of David's foreseeing that Christ was to be raised up, and was the person meant, is not represented as a part of the oath: but is only made to be Peter's assertion, that David, as a prophet, did foresee it and mean it."—*Pearce*. ¶ *To sit on his throne*. As David was king over God's peculiar people, so any successor, who should reign over a kingdom of worshippers, might be truly said to sit on his throne. And in this sense, the Jews, in our Saviour's day, evidently understood the prediction. The posterity of David had long ceased to exercise political power. His throne was not occupied by his descendants. The Jews, therefore, had settled upon the belief that the promised Messiah was intended by the prediction; and that, when he should come, he would sit on David's throne, reigning over the chosen people for ever. And in this conclusion they were substantially right, though circumstantially wrong. They believed the Messiah would reign over a chosen people; so far right: but this chosen people, instead of being wholly Jews, as they imagined, embraced all who worshipped God in spirit and in truth. They believed the Messiah would reign for ever; so far right, except that, when the full purpose of his reign shall have been accomplished, he will surrender the kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 28; but this kingdom, instead of being earthly, as they supposed, was to be spiritual, exercising dominion in the hearts of men, purifying them from sin, and preparing them for perfect happiness. In this sense, Jesus sat on the throne of David. And in proving this fact to the Jews, Peter had the advantage of their own

of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

interpretation of the prediction, and had only to convince them that Jesus was the true Messiah; for concerning that Messiah they believed the prediction was uttered.

31. *He seeing this before*. Or, foreseeing this; namely, that the Messiah should descend from him, and should occupy his throne, by being king over the people of God. ¶ *Spake of the resurrection of Christ*. Rather, of the Christ, that is, of the Messiah; for Christ, in the Greek, answers to Messiah, in the Hebrew, both signifying *anointed*. See note on Matt. i. 1. ¶ *His soul*. This is omitted by Griesbach, and marked as spurious by Knapp. They would read, That he was not left, &c. ¶ *In hell—corruption*. See note on ver. 27. Thus far, the Jews would not cavil at Peter's argument; for his interpretation of the prediction was so far consistent with their own, that all believed it to refer to the true Messiah, not to David himself.

32. *This Jesus*. Namely, the same Jesus of Nazareth whom they had crucified and slain, ver. 22, 23. ¶ *Hath God raised up*. Here is a repetition, from ver. 24, of Peter's second argument that Jesus was the Messiah. First, the fact of his death, which the Jews alleged against him, was proof of his Messiahship, because it had been predicted, and it was according to the determinate and manifest counsel of God; second, God had raised him from the dead, according to the prediction by David, which the Jews believed had reference to the Messiah,—though they had no very distinct idea of a resurrection from the dead, but attached some other meaning to the prediction. ¶ *Whereof we all are witnesses*. Probably intending to include the whole number of one hundred and twenty. Indeed Paul says that more than five hundred saw Jesus after his resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 6. But, to take the least possible number to whom he could have referred, namely, the twelve apostles, he offered sufficient testimony. By the Jewish law, the testimony of

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed

forth this, which ye now see and hear.

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith him-

two or three witnesses was enough to establish a matter; much more, the testimony of twelve men, against whose veracity nothing could be alleged, and who gave the most satisfactory proof of their sincerity, by hazarding their lives; for no man could then defend the cause of Christ without exposing himself to danger of death, as the subsequent history shows. Fully aware of this danger, they declared themselves witnesses of the resurrection, affirming that they had seen Jesus alive after he was crucified, had conversed with him, and knew him by infallible signs. And therefore they affirmed that he was the Messiah, or the Christ, whose resurrection David foresaw and predicted. How could such testimony be resisted? It was not resisted, on this occasion, but was overwhelming in its force, as the conversion of three thousand persons may witness.

33. *Being by the right hand of God exalted.* The right hand is an emblem of strength or power; and the meaning is, that Jesus was exalted by the power of God, either to heaven, by his ascension, or to that kingdom in which he was appointed to reign, until all enemies should be subdued, and the last enemy, death, destroyed. 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. Thus, in either case, was he exalted from the deep humiliation of the cross and the grave, to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. John xvii. 5. ¶ *Having received of the Father.* However highly he exalts the character of Jesus, it is observable that he attributes the whole to the power and grace of God, as the original source of the exaltation. ¶ *The promise of the Holy Ghost.* Jesus had assured his disciples, that, when he should return to his Father, they should not be left comfortless, but the Father would send the Holy Spirit to comfort, enlighten, strengthen, and sanctify them. John xiv. 16—18, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7—13. And had Peter been addressing believers, I should understand him to refer to that promise. But, as he was preaching to unbelieving Jews, who very probably had never heard of that promise, it

is perhaps more natural and reasonable to suppose him to refer to the ancient promise which he had quoted from Joel, ver. 17, 18, that God would pour out his Spirit on men, in the last days, or the days of the Messiah. Thus understood, the assertion both serves to account for the wonders witnessed, and to exhibit to the Jews an additional proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, inasmuch as he was not only raised, but was instrumental in pouring out that Spirit which they expected in the days of the Messiah. ¶ *Hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* Rather, *hath poured out*, as in ver. 17, where the same original word is used. The application of the apostle's argument is more distinctly seen, by preserving the same phraseology. He assured the Jews that the power of speaking foreign languages, which so much surprised them, was the effect of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, anciently promised, and now accomplished by the ministration of that same Jesus whom they had crucified, and whom God had exalted. This argument would seem to have been irresistible. There is no intimation that any one attempted to gainsay it. But there is evidence that it was effectual to the conversion of about three thousand souls, ver. 41. If it were thus overwhelming to the Jews, who had been personal enemies of Jesus, and who could not acknowledge him without condemning themselves, how much more should it establish our faith, under more favorable circumstances!

34. *For David is not ascended into the heavens.* "That is, with his body, as Enoch and Elias did; but that Jesus who is the Son and the Lord of David, and was to sit upon his throne, ver. 33, and reign over the house of Jacob for ever, Luke i. 32, 33, must have ascended thither; for thus did David prophesy concerning him, when he said, 'The Lord said unto my Lord,' &c."—*Whitby.* "Rather, did not ascend; and yet he said, The Lord, &c. The argument is this: David spoke of a Lord, who was to be at God's right hand; but David was not at God's right hand;

self, The LORD said unto my Lord,  
Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy  
footstool.

and therefore he must have meant this of some other person, and that person was Jesus the Christ; for of him only is it true, that his flesh did not see corruption, &c."—*Pearce*. I do not understand the apostle here to affirm any thing in regard to David in particular, or mankind in general, whether or not they are conscious of continued existence after the death of the body, or whether the body shall or shall not be raised at some future period; but only that David had not yet been exalted to heaven in a manner corresponding with his prediction. ¶ *But he saith himself, &c.* See Ps. cx. 1. ¶ *The Lord said unto my Lord.* Though the same word is here repeated in the Greek text and English translation, yet in the Hebrew two words are used, *Jehovah* and *Adoni*. The first of these was considered by the Jews as peculiarly applicable to the Supreme God, and none other; and so great was their reverence for it, that they seldom pronounced it, but supplied its place with some other word; the second denoted a superior in power and dignity, but did not necessarily indicate a being of higher rank than man, to whom it was sometimes applied. *Jehovah* said to *Adoni*; that is, God said to my Lord, or superior in dignity. The argument is, that David acknowledged a superior, who was to sit at the right hand of God; and this superior was the Christ. Our Lord himself quoted the same language, in proof that the Messiah should be regarded not as an earthly but a spiritual Prince, and the Pharisees could not gainsay it. See notes on Matt. xxii. 42—46. ¶ *Right hand.* The place of dignity. See Acts v. 31; Phil. ii. 9—11; Heb. i. 3, 8, 9.

35. *Until I make thy foes thy footstool.* He was to reign until all adversaries were overcome, all opposition vanquished, and a cordial subjection to his authority accomplished. See 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

36. *Therefore, &c.* The apostle here draws a conclusion from his whole argument, thus:—David predicted that one should rise from the dead before his body should become corrupted, and be exalted to a state of power and dignity

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

so far superior to his own as to constitute him properly his Lord; and as this prediction was not fulfilled in David, he could not have spoken of himself; and as it was fulfilled in both particulars in Jesus Christ, it must have been uttered concerning him. That it was thus fulfilled in Jesus, that he had actually risen from the dead and ascended up on high, the apostles were witnesses, and ready to testify, at the peril of life and all they held dear on earth. ¶ *All the house of Israel.* All the family or descendants of Israel. *House* is frequently put for *family*, in the scriptures. ¶ *Know assuredly.* Be convinced beyond doubt; be morally certain of the fact. The evidence was sufficient to require and produce this result. The Jews knew what had been predicted. They could not have been ignorant of the report that Jesus had risen from the dead. They had at this time witnessed an astonishing display of power which they could not account for, in any other way than that suggested by Peter. Another reason will be mentioned, at the end of this note. ¶ *God hath made.* Constituted, appointed, and, as it were, inaugurated into office. ¶ *That same Jesus whom ye have crucified.* This is a most vivid contrast. God had exalted to a station, inferior only to his own, and far above all which is named under heaven, the same person whom these Jews had despised as a Nazarene and Galilean, and whom they had derided, mocked, persecuted, and crucified. That any one should be so exalted was amazing; but that this exalted personage should be the same meek and humble Jesus who had so patiently endured scoffs, and insults, and injuries, and even an ignominious death, at their hands, was absolutely overwhelming, as the subsequent history shows. ¶ *Both Lord and Christ.* That is, such a Ruler as had been predicted, whose dominion should extend over all, who should sit at the right hand of God, and exercise authority in his name, until his foes became his footstool, or were thoroughly subdued; and also the very Christ, or Messiah, whom they

37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest

of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them,

had so long and so fondly expected. They had slain the hope of their nation; they had crucified him from whom they had expected the highest blessings; and he was now exalted to be their Sovereign and Judge. And what reason had they to doubt all this? If the facts existed as alleged by Peter, of which all the apostles also were witnesses, that Jesus had risen and ascended, how could they deny his conclusion?

Besides the corroborative evidence afforded by the gift of tongues, there was another powerful reason why the Jews should give full credit to the assertions of Peter; namely, the extraordinary change which had been wrought in him and his brethren,—a change which they could not have overlooked. Less than two months previous to this time, this band of apostles was scattered like a flock of timid sheep; they were so terrified by the sight of danger, that they all forsook their Master and fled, Matt. xxvi. 56; even Peter, the boldest of them, was driven to desperation, and denied his Master with vehemence and profanity, lest he should be involved in his fate, Matt. xxvi. 69—75. But now this same Peter, in the presence of thousands, boldly proclaimed himself a disciple; and, with a firmness which nothing could shake, charged upon the Jews who surrounded him, the guilt of murder,—of the murder of the promised Messiah; and the Eleven, with equal boldness and unshrinking courage, stood forth as witnesses of the same fact. How could this marvellous change be explained? Men are not ordinarily changed from cowards to heroes in a moment. The change was inexplicable, upon the known laws of human nature, without supposing the existence of some extraordinary cause. And they could assign none, except that which was assigned by Peter himself; namely, that he and his associates absolutely knew that their Master had risen from the dead, and ascended on high. This was sufficient to account for the change. They had been timid, because they lost their confidence in their Master; they became bold, because their confidence was renewed and increased. They

*knew* their Master lived, to protect and bless them; and not all the powers of earth could now move them. Nothing short of this could have produced the effect. It is not credible that they should thus brave the fury of the multitude, unless they had been convinced by infallible signs, and absolutely *knew* the facts which they affirmed. No solution has been or can be offered of this fact, consistent with any suspicion of imposture on the part of the apostles. It is manifest that no imposture was suspected by the Jews. They were constrained to yield full credit to the testimony offered, and three thousand became believers at once.

37. *When they heard this.* Namely, the declaration of Peter, that he whom they had ignominiously crucified was the true Messiah, and that God had exalted him to be Lord over all. ¶ *They were pricked in their heart.* “The word translated *were pricked* is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly denotes to pierce or penetrate with a needle, lancet, or sharp instrument; and then to pierce with grief, or acute pain of any kind. It answers precisely to our word *compunction*. It implies also the idea of sudden as well as acute grief. In this case it means that they were suddenly and deeply afflicted with anguish and alarm at what Peter had said.”—*Barnes*. “They felt alarmed. They were smitten, not only with strong compunction of conscience, but they trembled at those judgments which threatened them in ‘the great and notable day of the Lord.’”—*Liv-ermore*. ¶ *What shall we do?* They seem to have been convicted of sin, and desirous of knowing how their guilt might be removed. Like all awakened sinners, the inquiry uppermost in their minds was, What must we do, to change our condition for the better? The inquiry is represented as that of the whole multitude; and it doubtless was so in mind, if not in speech. It was directed, not to Peter alone, but to the “rest of the apostles” also; they pressed eagerly around the twelve, some addressing one, and some another.

38. *Repent.* See note on Matt. iii. 2.

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye

shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you,

There was truly very urgent need that they should repent, whether repentance be understood as a change of mind, or change of conduct, or both. They had hitherto been inimical or indifferent to Jesus and his gospel: it was necessary that they should become friendly. They had, some of them at least, been active in their exertions to crush him, and to stifle the sound of his gospel: it was necessary that they should enter heartily into the work of honoring him before men, and proclaiming his gospel throughout the world. In this way only could they forsake their sins, and become entitled to the privileges and immunities of discipleship. ¶ *Be baptized.* See note on Matt. iii. 6. It was required of them, not only that they should believe in Jesus, but that they should publicly profess their faith, in a manner similar to that which had long been familiar to the Jews. When proselytes were received from the Gentiles, they were admitted into the Jewish church by baptism; and this was regarded as a public profession of their conversion to Judaism. So, by now being baptized in the name of Jesus, they were to make a public protestation of their faith in Jesus and his doctrine. This was the visible seal of their admission into the Christian church. ¶ *In the name of Jesus Christ.* By receiving baptism in his name, they would necessarily acknowledge him as a religious teacher, and confess their obligation to be obedient to his precepts. See note on Matt. xxviii. 19. ¶ *For the remission of sins.* "In reference to the remission or removal of sins. Baptism points out the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit: and it is in reference to that purification that it is administered, and should in consideration never be separated from it. For baptism itself purifies not the conscience: it only points out the *grace* by which this is to be done."—*Clarke.* By thus acknowledging and professing Jesus as the Christ, they would place themselves within the purifying influence of his gospel, and become partakers of that divine influence which had been promised, and which is indicated in the succeeding clause.

¶ *Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* The divine influence, indicated by the gift of the Holy Spirit, is either ordinary or extraordinary. See note on Acts i. 5. It has been a question among commentators, which of the two is here intended. Some have supposed that every one of the three thousand converts, like the apostles, received power from on high, and became able to perform miracles and speak with tongues. But the subsequent history seems not to afford evidence that such was the fact. Indeed, by the same rule of interpretation, all who were converted by the apostles, during their whole ministry, must be supposed to have received the same powers; for they also received the Holy Ghost. If this were so, instead of being filled with admiration that so few laborers accomplished so great a work, we should rather marvel that so many, endowed with miraculous powers, should not have converted a still greater number to the truth. Doubtless, many, besides the Twelve, did receive the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit; but I think it a sound and prudent rule, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, to understand by the gift of the Holy Ghost no more than its ordinary influences. See note on Matt. iii. 11. Hence it seems more reasonable to adopt the opinion of those who interpret the phrase here in its general sense, and understand the apostle to give assurance that they who repented and were baptized should receive all the influence of the Holy Spirit which was necessary to their faith, peace, and sanctification,—the same, in fact, which is promised to all true disciples of our Lord.

39. *For the promise, &c.* That is, of the divine influence, or the influence of the Holy Ghost. ¶ *To you.* Awfully guilty as these Jews were, in opposing, persecuting, and murdering the Lord Jesus Christ, still the apostle assured them that God was ready to bestow blessings. Yea, he had directed that such spiritual blessings should, first of all, be bestowed on them. See Acts iii. 14, 15, 25, 26. They were not, therefore, to despair; but rather to give

and to your children, and to all that are afar off; *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words

glory to that God who sent his Son for the benefit of just such guilty mortals, to call sinners to repentance. Matt. ix. 13; 1 Tim. i. 15. ¶ *Your children.* The prophet said *sons and daughters*. The manifest object here, as in ver. 17, 18, is to show that God is no respecter of persons; but, regarding all men as his children, he will bestow his blessings impartially. He will see that, in due time, the enlightening, purifying, and sanctifying influences of his Spirit shall be experienced by "all flesh," ver. 17; that is, as this expression here denotes, by all his intelligent children. ¶ *Afar off.* This term is often applied to the Gentiles. Probably Peter used the words with reference to the Jews, who were scattered abroad through the world; for he did not yet understand that the Gentiles were to share in the spiritual blessings of God and the gift of the Holy Ghost. It needed a special manifestation of the divine will, to convince him of this fact; and such a lesson he received, which was effectual to convince him and his brethren also. See Acts x., xi. ¶ *Even as many, &c.* The idea is, that every one who hears the gospel may feel an assurance that its blessings are provided for him, as well as for others. It is designed to be good tidings of great joy unto all people. See note on Luke ii. 10. It has not suited the purpose of God thus to *call* all men at once. The gospel itself was not distinctly proclaimed on earth, until four thousand years after the creation; and, since that period, many have lived in regions where its sound has not been heard. But because, by the providence of God, so many have been destitute of its peculiar blessings through life, it by no means follows that he will leave them destitute for ever. In his own time, and in his own way, he calls every individual, operates upon him by a divine influence, saves him from sin, and makes him to know the truth and rejoice in the God of his salvation. 1 Tim. ii. 4.

40. *With many other words, &c.* Hence it appears that the whole discourse of Peter is not recorded, but only the more important parts, or per-

did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 ¶ Then they that gladly re-

haps a general synopsis of it. The argument, which is distinctly reported, was illustrated and enforced by many other words, all tending to the same general result. ¶ *Testify and exhort.* He testified the facts, or bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus, the truth of the divine promises, and the faithfulness of Him who promised; and, by such arguments, exhorted the people to repentance of sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *Save yourselves, &c.* "This expression here denotes, Preserve yourselves from the influence, opinions, and fate of this generation."—*Barnes.* The salvation here indicated has manifest reference to the calamity denounced on the generation then living. Matt. xxiii. 36; xxiv. 34. To avoid this impending destruction, it was necessary that disciples should separate themselves from the unbelieving multitude, renounce their sins, and obey the will of their Master. ¶ *Untoward generation.* Literally, crooked generation; metaphorically, perverse, iniquitous, depraved generation. "This age or race of men, the Jews then living. They were not to apprehend danger from them, from which they were to deliver themselves; but they were to apprehend danger from being *with* them, uniting in their plans, designs, and feelings. From the influence of their opinions, &c., they were to escape. That generation was signally corrupt and wicked. See Matt. xxiii.; xii. 39; xvi. 4; Mark viii. 38. They had crucified the Messiah; and they were for their sins soon to be destroyed."—*Barnes.* To this calamitous destruction, which befell the Jewish nation when the cup of their iniquity became full, frequent reference is made in the New Testament; and sinners are earnestly exhorted to repent, and believers to remain steadfast in faith and virtue, lest they should be involved in the common ruin. Preservation from this awful calamity is often styled salvation. See notes on Matt. xxiv. 13; Mark xiii. 20.

41. *Gladly received.* Cheerfully and joyfully gave credit to the testimony of the apostle, and believed his declara-

ceived his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

tions. ¶ *Were baptized.* They made public profession of their faith, and were received into the new church, in a manner similar to that in which proselytes were admitted members of the Jewish church. It is the natural import of the language here used, that the whole number of three thousand were baptized on the day of Pentecost. The manner of the baptism is not stated. It is certain, however, that Peter did not commence his address until after nine o'clock in the morning. Besides the argument which is recorded, he exhorted the people "with many other words." A large portion of the day must have been thus consumed. It seems improbable that, in the short time which remained, the twelve apostles could have baptized three thousand persons, *by immersion*; and it may be reasonably concluded that the rite was administered in some other form. But, in whatever manner they were baptized, the main fact is sufficiently clear: namely, so mighty was the influence of the miracle performed *upon* the apostles, and the arguments used *by* them, that three thousand persons laid down the weapons of their rebellion, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and professed themselves his subjects by receiving baptism in his name. This effect is the more remarkable, when it is considered that the Jewish authorities were known to have denounced excommunication against all who should confess Jesus as the Messiah, John ix. 22, and had actually crucified him. None would venture to brave their indignation, unless they were fully persuaded and convinced of the truth. The hope of attaining honor or popularity may induce multitudes to profess what they do not believe. But no such motive could operate here. To profess Christianity in that day was to sacrifice popularity, and hazard the loss of earthly possessions and even of life. ¶ *There were added.* That is, to the company of believers. ¶ *Souls.* Persons. The following remarks deserve serious consideration:—"The custom of drawing inferences from the day of Pentecost to modern revivals, is wholly out of place. The cases are widely

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

dissimilar. To speak of 'a Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit,' is a mere figure of speech. The day of miracles is no more. We are to look now for the ordinary, but not for the extraordinary, gifts of the Spirit upon the speaker. The preacher is not now a Peter, with an apostolic tongue of fire and authority, but a man with only his natural resources, so far as inspiration is concerned. An audience is not prepared now, as was the audience then, by a long course of events, to receive a strong and decided impression in relation to the simple matter of fact of Jesus being the Messiah. The solemn scenes of the Pentecost, therefore, furnish no justification or encouragement to the disorders and unhealthy excitements of modern revivals; and in the beautiful picture which is here presented of the church, after this occasion, contrasted with the schisms and backslidings of churches at the present day, after what is called a revival, we behold the difference between the work of God and the violent and unnatural work of men, and of unwise men."—*Livermore.*

42. *Continued steadfastly.* Or, with more exactness, *constantly adhered to.* They persevered in their Christian profession, and adhered, both in faith and practice, to the instructions of the apostles. There is no evidence that any of these were among the number whose love waxed cold, before the time of judgment. Matt. xxiv. 12. In the absence of such evidence, we may well understand this general declaration to imply that they remained steadfast in their adherence to Christianity, even until the end of life. Especially, when we take into the account the fact that their conversion was connected with a miracle, if not indeed miraculous in itself, we need not doubt that it was effectual and permanent. ¶ *Apostles' doctrine.* That is, the doctrine of Jesus, which his apostles preached. ¶ *Fellowship.* They felt that they had common interests, blessings, hopes, and causes for thankfulness to God; that they had a common Master, common duties, trials, and enjoyments; and that a common home was prepared for them in the mansions



43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

of their Father's house. Hence they felt a strong sympathy for each other, and they remained attached to each other by an unbroken bond of fellowship and union. ¶ *In breaking of bread.* Bread was ordinarily baked by the Jews in thin cakes, which were *broken*, instead of being *cut*, when placed before the family or guests for food. Hence the phrase *breaking of bread* was used to signify eating an ordinary meal. The same phrase doubtless sometimes denotes that peculiar participation of food, styled the communion of the Lord's supper. Some have supposed that this is its meaning here; others, that it indicates what were styled *agapæ*, or love-feasts; and others, that common social entertainments are denoted. The question, perhaps, cannot be decided with certainty. It would seem, from what follows, that the disciples were accustomed to take their ordinary food in large companies; and it is by no means improbable, that, for a time at least, they literally adhered to the direction referred to in 1 Cor. xi. 24—26, and at every meal so remembered the Lord, as to convert it into a religion communion. ¶ *In prayers.* This is a duty and privilege, which no Christian will omit. Public, social, and private prayers are all profitable to the spirit which is heartily engaged in them; but chiefly the latter, when nothing is allowed to distract the attention from communion with the Father of spirits. See notes on Matt. vi. 5—8.

43. *And fear came, &c.* The events of that day, and those which had been recounted by the apostle, were fitted to produce a sensation of awe in the minds of believers. The speaking in foreign languages by unlettered men, the boldness and energy of speech exhibited by one who was not known to have ever before addressed an assembly, the amazing effect of his address upon so many minds, — all these must have convinced unbelievers that some hitherto unknown power was displayed; and they could not be certain that it was not divine power. The natural effect would be a sensation of awe and solemnity. The account given by the historian is perfectly natural and life-like. ¶ *Ma-*

*ny wonders and signs, &c.* See note on ver. 22. Jesus had promised his disciples that such power should be imparted to them. Mark xvi. 17, 18. And the exercise of this power was probably one cause of the awe and solemnity which rested on the minds of the people.

44. *All that believed.* That is, in the great fact, announced by the apostles, that Jesus had truly risen and ascended; and in the conclusion, so irresistibly drawn from that fact, that he was the true Messiah. ¶ *Were together.* This phrase probably does not indicate that all these disciples were constantly together in one room or one dwelling; for this would be utterly impracticable, under the circumstances of the case. The meaning seems to be, that they were united in feeling and purpose; that a spirit of harmony prevailed among them; that they felt themselves associated in one band by the ties of Christian faith and love. ¶ *And had all things common.* This was one result of the spirit of perfect union and pure love, which prevailed among the disciples. It is now generally agreed among commentators, that this general expression is to be understood with some limitation. It may be remarked, in the outset, that all sober-minded Christians have agreed that the expression should be limited to the pecuniary interests of the disciples. Some fanatics and some hypocrites have insisted that the disciples held literally *all* things in common, — possessions, families, and every thing else; and have urged this as an apology and an example for their own unrighteousness. But all good men unite in condemnation of such folly. And, in regard to pecuniary affairs, it may be doubted whether the passage is to be understood in a strictly literal sense. From what follows in ver. 45, it would seem that each one retained the control of his property, but freely imparted what was necessary to the relief of others. A spirit of pure benevolence and generosity was awakened, which induced them to contribute liberally of their worldly goods. Of the three thousand converts, doubtless many were from a great distance, who re-

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily

mained in Jerusalem longer than they had designed; and the brethren in Jerusalem supplied their wants, cheerfully disposing of their possessions to enable them to do so. Subsequently, it would seem, some of the brethren surrendered their goods to the apostles, to be used for the common benefit of the brotherhood. Acts iv. 34—37. But, even then, it was a voluntary act, not required by the apostles. This is at least implied in Peter's address to Ananias. Acts. v. 3, 4. Thus it was with the apostles themselves, in our Saviour's day. They made common stock of their possessions: nevertheless, it is true that John retained his dwelling-house; for he took to his house the mother of Jesus, and there provided for her. But whatever may have been the practice for a short time, it is clear that an absolute community of goods was not required by our Lord or by his disciples; and, if such a community were established, it was soon abandoned. It is evident from the subsequent part of the history, that, even in the apostolic age, believers retained personal possession of their property. Acts xviii. 3; xxviii. 30; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Jas. ii. 2. And all the exhortations to generosity, contained in the Epistles, presuppose individual possessions, and not a community of goods.

45. *Sold their possessions and goods.* That is, as the two words used in the original denote, their real estates, such as houses and lands, and their personal estates, or movable property. The disciples not only bestowed such money and provisions as were on hand, but sold their property to procure means to assist them who were needy. The love of wealth was overpowered by the stronger love of their brethren; and they were ready to make any sacrifice for the advancement of the great cause which they had espoused. Such a state of mind was conducive to their safety in the perilous hour which approached, as well as accordant with the spirit of the religion which they had embraced. See note on Luke xvi. 1—12. ¶ *Parted them to all, &c.* Or, to all the needy. This serves to illus-

trate the meaning of ver. 44. Distribution was made to the necessitous; a willingness existed to bestow assistance if it was needed; and whether this were done by individuals, as here, or by the apostles, Acts iv. 35, or by the deacons, Acts vi. 3, it was done for the relief of the poor. But the evidence is not sufficient to justify the conclusion that believers generally renounced all personal control over their pecuniary affairs, and reduced themselves to a state of utter dependency on the daily distributions for support.

46. *Continuing daily with one accord in the temple.* It was the custom of Christians in the apostolic age, as it had been their Master's, to attend regularly upon the public worship of God, in the temple and in the synagogues. God had more fully revealed himself to them than heretofore, and had taught them that forms and ceremonies availed little in comparison with pure spiritual worship: nevertheless they were willing to unite with their unbelieving brethren, in praising God for the many blessings enjoyed in common, while they glorified his name for the special blessings of which they had been made partakers. ¶ *Breaking bread from house to house.* Or, at home, as the marginal reading has it. They worshipped God together in the temple, and together ate bread at home, making welcome all who had need. See note on ver. 42. ¶ *Meat.* This word, though now applied to flesh alone, was formerly used for all kinds of food, whether animal or vegetable. See Gen. i. 29, 30; ix. 3. ¶ *Gladness.* Or, rejoicing. The word here used is derived from that which occurs in Matt. v. 12; John viii. 56; 1 Pet. i. 8; iv. 13; and denotes a rapturous joy, which the common translation does not fully express. Their faith inspired them with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

¶ *Singleness of heart.* The word *aphelotēs* (ἀφελότης), here rendered *singleness*, does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It denotes, literally, soundness or completeness, and is applied to things having nothing superfluous, and in which nothing is lacking.

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Figuratively, it denotes simplicity of mind and manners, free from all craftiness or dissimulation. It may here have reference to the manner in which they exercised hospitality, — sincerely and heartily, not ostentatiously.

47. *Praising God.* In the midst of their joy, they were not forgetful of Him who had bestowed the blessings in which they rejoiced. ¶ *Having favor with all the people.* We can scarcely understand this so literally as to include the scribes and rulers of the Jews. They had uniformly opposed the Master; and they immediately commenced opposing the disciples. Acts iv. 1—3. The meaning is, the mass of the people regarded them with favor. ¶ *Church.* That is, the body of believers. This word had not originally the technical sense now attached to it, but indicated a company of persons selected, or called out, whether large or small. See note on Matt. xvi. 18. In this case, it manifestly means the whole number who had been *called out* from Judaism into Christianity. ¶ *Daily.* Continual accessions were made. It should be observed, that, in ver. 42—47, the historian describes the general state of the church for an indefinite time *after* the day of Pentecost; at least, for several days. ¶ *Such as should be saved.* Rather, the saved, or such as were saved. “The Christians are so styled elsewhere. So 1 Cor. i. 18, To us the saved, Christ crucified is the power of God; and when the means of salvation, or that grace of God which brings salvation, was vouchsafed to them, salvation is said to come, Luke xix. 9; Rom. xi. 11; or to be sent to them, Acts xxviii. 28.”—*Whitby*. The salvation, here indicated, is understood by some to mean deliverance from endless misery; by others, deliverance from ignorance and the power of sin; and by others, security against the temporal destruction about to befall the unbelieving Jews. The first-named opinion cannot be admitted, among other reasons, because the apostle made no reference to the danger of endless misery, in his discourse; the second is doubtless true to a certain extent; and

## CHAPTER III.

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the

for the last, Dr. Hammond urges this argument:—“The rise of that interpretation in that place will be best taken from the admonition of St. Peter, ver. 40, in these words: ‘Be ye saved from this crooked generation;’ where the import of being saved is clearly getting out, escaping, flying from that great pertinacy and obduration of that age against all the miracles of Christ and his apostles, crucifying him, and resisting all the powerful methods of his workings; that is, not being saved eternally (for that would not be matter of exhortation, unless as that is a certain consequent of repentance and belief in Christ), but retracting the vicious course that they and others went on in,” &c. Note on Luke xiii. 23. There can be no question that an escape from the terrible calamity which overwhelmed the Jews is often styled salvation; and such may be the allusion here. But perhaps the more direct reference is to a deliverance from the evil opinions and practices of the Jews, which drew down such an awful judgment.

## CHAPTER III.

1. The particular time when the events occurred which are recorded in this chapter is not specified. It appears from ver. 46 of the preceding chapter, that the apostles and other disciples habitually resorted to the temple, that is, to the courts where the people were accustomed to assemble, at the hours of prayer. See note on Matt. xxi. 12. It is also recorded in ver. 43 of the same chapter, that “many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.” As a specimen of those wonders, the historian mentions a miracle of healing, which was performed on one of the days previous to the time when the apostles were obliged, by persecution, to abandon the temple as a place of worship. ¶ *Peter and John went up together,* &c. It does not appear that any other of the apostles were in company with them. Whether by accident or design, they went, as their Lord directed when he sent them on their first mission, not alone, but two together. See notes on

hour of prayer, *being* the ninth hour.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple ;

3 Who, seeing Peter and John

Matt. x. 5 ; Luke x. 1. ¶ *Hour of prayer.* That is, the evening prayer. The Jews had three regular hours of prayer, at which times sacrifices also were offered ; namely, the third hour, or nine o'clock in the morning ; the sixth hour, or noon ; and the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. For the manner in which the Jews computed the hours of the day, see note on John i. 39.

2. *Lame, &c.* Not a case of recent lameness, which unbelievers might have represented to be feigned ; but a constant infirmity under which he was known to have labored from childhood. ¶ *Carried.* He was utterly disabled from walking. The long continuance and severity of his lameness rendered the cure more noticeable as well as more wonderful. ¶ *They laid daily.* He was not a stranger, whom nobody knew, and who might have been suspected as an impostor ; but one whom they had been accustomed to see daily, for a long time. ¶ *At the gate — called Beautiful.* This is generally supposed to be the gate opening upon the court of the women, concerning which Josephus says, it " was of Corinthian brass, and greatly excelled those that were only covered over with silver and gold. The magnitudes of the other gates were equal one to another ; but that over the Corinthian gate, which opened on the east, over against the gate of the holy house itself, was much larger ; for its height was fifty cubits, and its doors were forty cubits ; and it was adorned after a more costly manner, as having much richer and thicker plates of silver and gold upon them than the other."—*Jew. War*, v. ch. v. 3. Through this gate many passed at the hour of prayer ; and here the friends of the lame man regularly placed him, that he might receive alms or charitable gifts. Anciently there were no hospitals provided for the infirm, and they were accustomed to solicit charity from the pub-

about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

4 And Peter fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

lic. For this purpose, the most frequented places were selected, such as the public highways, the gates of the temple and synagogues, and those of rich men. To this custom frequent reference is made in the Gospels. See Mark x. 46 ; Luke xvi. 20 ; John ix. 1, 8.

3. *Asked an alms.* A gift or donation. There is no evidence that he knew either of the apostles ; but, seeing them pass, he made the same request of them as of others.

4. *Fastening his eyes, &c.* Looking intently, or with much earnestness. See note on Luke iv. 20. ¶ *With John.* Though Peter, as usual, was the speaker, John was also actively engaged. When a work of mercy was to be performed, the beloved John was deeply interested. ¶ *Look on us.* This command was given, not alone to fix the attention of the lame man, but also to apprise the multitude who were entering the temple, that something unusual was about to occur. The apostles were sensible that miraculous power was imparted to them, as a divine testimony to the truth which they proclaimed ; and hence, while they used it for the relief of the distressed, they chose that others might witness it, and thereby be induced to lend a more willing ear to their message. In so doing they copied the example of their Master, who generally performed his miracles in public, and for the benefit of bystanders as well as the parties more immediately concerned. John xi. 41, 42.

5. *Expecting to receive, &c.* Little did the lame man anticipate the blessing which was in store for him. A few pence to relieve his present necessity was the utmost he expected ; instead of which, he was made able to earn a comfortable subsistence for himself, and to engage in the active pursuits and enjoyments of life. Thus often, when we ask special gifts from God, deeming

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received strength.

8 And he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into

them sufficient, he withholds them, but bestows general blessings of indefinitely higher value.

6. *Silver and gold*, &c. The metals most commonly used for coins; here put for the coins themselves. ¶ *Such as I have*, &c. Though destitute of money, the apostles were ready to impart a blessing more precious than silver or gold. ¶ *In the name*, &c. That is, by the authority. The apostles did not pretend to exercise miraculous power in their own names, or by their own authority. They appealed to Him who had been highly exalted by the Father, and who had promised to aid them in performing miracles. Mark xvi. 17, 18. Thus doing, they imitated the modesty and humility of their Master, who uniformly professed himself dependant on the Father for power to perform miracles. John v. 19; xi. 41—43; xvii. 2. ¶ *Jesus of Nazareth*. So called by his enemies in derision, and so denominated in the inscription placed above his head on the cross. By this name, he was probably well known to the lame man and to the multitude; and the apostles intended that it should be distinctly understood that the miracle was wrought by power communicated through him. ¶ *Rise up and walk*. As much as to say, Receive power to walk.

7. *And he took him*, &c. This was a testimony to the lame man, that Peter was sincere, and that he verily believed ability to walk would be bestowed. He raised him up, placing him on his feet, in full confidence that he would then be able to stand and walk. ¶ *Received strength*. In this consisted the miracle. The walking and leaping was conclusive evidence that the miracle had been performed; but the miracle itself consisted in removing the cause of lameness, by imparting strength to

the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which

the feet and ancle-bones. The lameness, as it would seem, was occasioned by weakness, not by any natural malformation, or loss of limbs.

8. *Leaping up*. The lame man gave full credit to Peter, and doubted not his ability to heal by the authority of Jesus. Perhaps, also, he was conscious that strength was imparted, and manifested his joy by leaping up from the ground. The account is so simple and so true to nature, that its genuineness cannot be doubted. ¶ *Praising God*. The Jews worshipped God as the original source of all wisdom, and power, and goodness. It was natural, therefore, when such manifestly superhuman power was displayed, that the man should recognize his restoration to perfect soundness as the gift of God, and should express his thankfulness to him. It were well if all men would be thankful to God for all mercies, and not allow the creature to interpose and obscure the Creator. James i. 17.

9. *All the people saw him*, &c. The fact that a miracle had been performed was openly known, and the evidence was convincing. Many people were present, as it was the hour of prayer, when multitudes assembled at the temple.

10. *And they knew*, &c. There was no room for doubt, whether the restoration were actual or not. They knew the individual. They had seen him daily, for a long time, in the place where he was accustomed to solicit charity. ¶ *And they were filled*, &c. A perfectly natural result of such a display of power. See note on Acts ii. 12.

11. *Held Peter and John*. This may mean, according to the primary import of the original, that he clung to the apostles by grasping their hands or gar-

was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12 ¶ And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ?

ments ; or, it may be interpreted, that he adhered closely to them, would not allow himself to be separated from them, persisted in keeping very near them. This is not a very unusual sense of the word. ¶ *All the people ran together*, &c. There was a great gathering, as was perfectly natural. It is well known that any extraordinary circumstance, even of little consequence, will speedily attract a crowd of spectators in a densely populated city. And, certainly, such a miracle as this, when noised abroad, would bring together a multitude in the temple, where the people had assembled for prayer. This afforded the apostles an opportunity to make a profitable use of the miracle, by convincing the people that he in whose name it was performed was truly the Messiah. And they improved it effectually. See Acts iv. 4. ¶ *Porch that is called Solomon's*. "Not that the very porch, built by Solomon, was now standing ; for that was burned and destroyed by the Babylonians, as well as the rest of the temple ; but because this was built on the very same pile that his was built upon. For the temple standing upon a high and steep hill, with a deep and sharp precipice about it, Solomon, to make room for the floor of the mount, which was too strait, filled up the ditch on the east side with huge stones strongly jointed together, and he built his porch upon that pile ; and because this of Herod's was erected also upon that same foundation, it therefore is called 'Solomon's porch.' It was the first gate or entrance into the Mountain of the House ; and not only the very building of the porch, but the court within, bare the same name."—*Light-foot*.

12. *When Peter saw it*. That is, the immense concourse of people, and the wonder expressed in their countenances. ¶ *He answered*. Rather, according to our idiom, he addressed. This word often denotes, in the scriptures, no more than commencing to speak, whether in reply to a question or not.

or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk ?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus ;

See Matt. xi. 25 ; xvii. 4 ; xxii. 1. ¶ *Why marvel ye at this ?* Why should you be so astonished at this new display of divine power, when you have so recently seen similar works performed by him whom ye have ignominiously crucified ? ¶ *Why look ye so earnestly on us*, &c. Why is your attention fixed on us, as if we naturally possessed power to perform such wonders ? We are only instruments in the hand of a higher Power. ¶ *Our own power*. Either by skill in medicine, or by any natural means in our possession. ¶ *Or holiness*. The possession of miraculous power affords good evidence of individual purity ; because God will not thus aid sinners to impose on mankind. See John ix. 30—33. But individual purity is by no means uniformly attended by miraculous power. Nathanael was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile, before his conversion. John i. 47 ; but there is no evidence that he was able to perform miracles, until he was empowered by his Master. The Jews are said to have had a fancy that, by extraordinary holiness, men might acquire miraculous power ; and, in more recent times, this Jewish error has been revived. But Peter expressly disclaimed the idea that his power resulted from his holiness ; and distinctly announced the fact, that such power is never possessed, except by gift from the supreme source of power.

13. *The God of Abraham, &c.* These descriptive epithets were those by which the Jews were accustomed to indicate the true God. Very probably Peter used this form of speech to convince them, in the outset, that he was about to propose no new object of worship ; but that the God whose power they had just witnessed in the miracle, and whom they were thus admonished to reverence and obey, was the same whom the patriarchs worshipped, and who was acknowledged by themselves as the God of their fathers. There was a peculiar propriety, also, in specifying these three patriarchs by name ;

whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One,

for to each of them was the promise made, that in his seed, which is Christ, should all men be blessed. Gal. iii. 16.

¶ *Hath glorified his Son Jesus.* First of all, Peter declares that the same Jesus, whom they had despised and crucified, was the Son of that God whom they adored. Some understand this to mean merely that God honored his Son, by enabling his apostles to perform miracles in his name. But I prefer a different interpretation; namely, that God had glorified his Son by raising him from the dead, receiving him up into heaven, assigning him a seat at his right hand, and bestowing on him power to perform miracles both personally, and by the hands of his disciples. Rom. i. 4; Phil. ii. 9—11; Heb. i. 3. The people were exhorted to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, on the ground that the miracle, performed in his name, afforded evidence that the God of their fathers had glorified him.

¶ *Denied him.* Denied that he was the Messiah; repudiated him as a spiritual prince. John xix. 15. ¶ *Was determined to let him go.* Pilate was satisfied that Jesus was innocent of the charges alleged against him, and indeed of any transgression. He testified to the Jews, "I find no fault in him." He assured them, that, if they would put him to death, they must take the responsibility; he would wash his hands from all participation in the sanguinary transaction. Matt. xxvii. 24; John xix. 6. And he probably would have persisted in his refusal to crucify Jesus, had he not been fearful that he should be accused of treason to the Roman emperor. See note on John xix. 12. The testimony of Pilate to his innocence, after an examination of the charge, aggravated the guilt of them who continued to be clamorous for his destruction; and of this fact Peter distinctly reminded them.

14. *The Holy One.* See note on Acts ii. 27. ¶ *The Just.* This word not only indicates innocence from guilt of any kind, but has allusion to legal justification, resulting from constant and perfect conformity to the requisitions of the law. The Jews first

and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you:

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the

accused our Lord of blasphemy, and he was condemned by the priests, but without law and contrary to law. When they brought the case before the legal tribunal, they abandoned the charge of blasphemy, and accused him of sedition; but upon this charge both Herod and Pilate failed to find any proof of his guilt, and Pilate openly proclaimed his innocence. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 24; John xix. 4. Even Judas, who betrayed him, afterwards acknowledged his own guilt, and protested that Jesus was innocent. Matt. xxvii. 4. Such was the character of Jesus, that he was free, not only from actual guilt, but from all legal or reasonable suspicion of guilt. ¶ *And desired a murderer.* The guilt of destroying a just person was aggravated by choosing to spare the life of a notorious murderer, rather than fail to wreak their vengeance on one whose only crime consisted in telling them the truth, and rebuking their iniquity and hypocrisy. Mark xv. 6—11. They were willing to spare one who had destroyed life, for the sake of destroying one who labored for their benefit, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John x. 10.

15. *And killed the Prince of life.* The word here rendered *prince* is the same which is translated *captain* in Heb. ii. 10. and indicates a leader or conductor. Jesus pointed out the way of moral life here, announced an endless life of purity and blessedness hereafter, and led the way to that life, or demonstrated its existence, by passing through the grave in his own person, and visibly ascending to heaven. In either sense, he might properly be styled the Prince of life; for spiritual life, here and hereafter, was communicated through him. This particular epithet describes him in striking contrast with the murderer before named. ¶ *Whom God hath raised,* &c. Peter not only contrasts the two acts of iniquity of which the Jews had been guilty, but also exhibits the contrast between their conduct and the work of God. They destroyed life. He restored it. They subjected Jesus to an ignominious death. God glorified

dead; whereof we are witnesses.

16 And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him, hath

him, by a resurrection to immortal life and power. ¶ *We are witnesses.* See note on Acts ii. 32.

16. *His name.* Name is often put for person, or the power or authority of a person. See note on ver. 6. In this case, Peter may be understood to mean that the lame man was healed by Jesus himself, or by virtue of the power and authority vested in him by the Father, and communicated by him to his disciples. ¶ *Through faith in his name.* Through faith in him as the Messiah, or confidence in his power. "By means of faith in him; that is, by the faith which Peter and John had in Jesus. It does not refer to any faith that the man had himself, for there is no evidence that he believed in him."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Whom ye see and know.* They were so were well acquainted with the lame man who had been healed, that they could not suspect any deception or collusion. See note on ver. 10. ¶ *The faith which is by him, &c.* The great object of this miracle was to afford evidence that Jesus was the true Messiah. Hence Peter repeats the fact that what had been done was accomplished in his name, or by power derived through him, so that the Jews should not by any possibility overlook it. ¶ *Perfect soundness.* The weakness of his feet and ankles was effectually removed, and strength imparted; of which fact visible evidence was given by the man himself, by leaping and walking, as no lame man could do. ¶ *In the presence of you all.* There had been no concealment practised, to occasion suspicion of deception; but the miracle was performed openly. This declaration was an implied challenge to examine the matter with the nicest scrutiny, and to detect, if possible, any imposture which might be suspected.

17. *Brethren.* Notwithstanding the wickedness of which he had before proved them guilty, Peter acknowledged the Jews as brethren; thus expressing not only the tenderness and benevolence of his own emotions, but his conviction that they were children of the same Father in whose paternal

given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.

goodness he trusted. He was not inclined to renounce all sympathy for them, and all interest in their welfare; but, in imitation of his blessed Master, he spake kindly, and endeavored to turn them away from their iniquities, that they might have present peace. ¶ *I wot.* I know. This word is now obsolete. ¶ *That through ignorance ye did it.* This is stated as a mitigating circumstance in their case; not as a full excuse, because he had already proved them guilty, and immediately exhorted them to repent. Nor is it intended that their ignorance could be pleaded even in extenuation of the whole transaction; for they well knew it was wrong to destroy the life of an innocent person, and for the sake of thus destroying life, to demand that a murderer should be let loose upon the community. But they were ignorant that Jesus was the Messiah; ignorant that they were crucifying the Prince of life and the Lord of glory. They were not aware of the full extent of their wickedness. See note on Luke xxiii. 34. So that, although they were guilty of deep sin, in wantonly destroying life, and in the indulgence of such unholy passions as prompted them, still this aggravation of wilfully crucifying the Messiah was obviated by their ignorance. ¶ *As did also your rulers.* By including the rulers among others who were entitled to the benefit of this mitigating circumstance, Peter distinctly indicates that the ignorance had special reference to the Messiahship of Jesus. They could not plead ignorance in regard to any other portion of the transaction. They knew it was wrong to destroy the life of an innocent person, and they knew that Jesus was innocent; at the least, they knew that all their efforts to prove him guilty, either of blasphemy or treason, were unsuccessful. They must have been conscious that they crucified him for the gratification of their pride and wrath. For so much guilt, they had no excuse and no palliation. Nor were they entirely free from guilt as to the charge of murdering the Messiah; for, though they did



18 But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19 ¶ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may

not believe on Jesus, their ignorance was partially voluntary, because they had evidence sufficient to convince them of his Messiahship, if they had not been blinded by their own passions. Still, whatever the cause, they were ignorant that Jesus was actually the hope of their nation; and Peter assured them they were entitled to the benefit of that ignorance. It should be regarded as a circumstance of mitigation.

18. *Those things, &c.* Namely, the opposition, ignominy, persecution, and death, which Jesus encountered at the hand of the Jews. ¶ *Hath showed.* Had predicted or announced. ¶ *By the mouth of all his prophets.* Not that any one prophet foretold all the events referred to, but that some had predicted some, and others, other particulars; and thus were all these things predicted by all the prophets reckoned together. ¶ *Hath so fulfilled.* Hath brought to pass in this manner. He foretold, that the Saviour would be rejected and slain, when he should appear on the earth. The design of God was good, and he accomplished it by human instrumentality. But these human instruments had no intention to fulfil the predictions of prophets, or to accomplish the purposes of God: they meant it for evil, and therefore were guilty. See note on Acts ii. 23.

19. *Repent ye, therefore, &c.* Because you are guilty, notwithstanding the mitigation afforded by your former ignorance; because you have thus departed far from that path of holiness which alone is the path of peace; therefore, it behoves you to repent. See note on Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *Be converted.* Rather, turn ye. The common translation does not accurately express the meaning of the original, which is not in the passive, but in the active form. The same word occurs, Luke xvii. 31; 1 Thess. i. 9: it means simply to turn or change one's course, whether literally or figuratively. In this case, the whole exhortation may be understood thus: Repent of all your unbelief and unholy passions; cherish a different state of mind and disposition of heart; turn from your wicked ways, and pursue the way of righteousness. *That your sins*

*may be blotted out.* That is, may be forgiven. The allusion is to the ancient manner of writing on wax with a sharp-pointed instrument called a *style*, and then effacing all the marks with the other end of the instrument, which was flat; as if their sins were thus recorded, and, upon their repentance and change of conduct, the record should be obliterated. This seems, though in a figurative manner, to express the true idea of forgiveness, which consists in regarding and treating the transgressor as if he had never sinned, or as if no memorial of his transgression was on record. See Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; Heb. viii. 10—12. When God says he will no more remember the sins and transgressions of his children, it is equivalent to saying that he will efface or obliterate all record of their iniquities, and that he will regard and treat them as if they had never sinned. But, before this can be done, men must repent and turn from their sins. Of course God will remember sin so long as it exists, whatever be implied in his not remembering it after it is broken off and forsaken. And hence, I may remark, is derived an argument for the final extinction of sin; for God will no more remember it, and of course it cannot exist. ¶ *When the times of refreshing shall come, &c.* Or, of breathing; in allusion to cessation from active exertions, for the purpose of taking breath. It is generally agreed that a better translation would be, "That the times of refreshing may come." Much difference of opinion has existed as to the time here indicated. Some suppose a reference is made to the period when the Jews shall be gathered from their dispersion, and converted to Christianity; and some, to the time when, they suppose, Christ will reign a thousand years on the earth. "'Repent ye now, that your sins may be blotted out, two thousand, or I know not how many hundred years hence, when the calling of the Jews shall come.' If this be not the sense that they make of this text, that produce it to assert Christ's personal reign on earth for a thousand years, I know not why they should then produce it; and if this be the sense, I must confess I see no sense in

be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus

it. The words are facile and easy, and have no intricacy at all in them, if the scripture may be suffered to go upon its own wheels; and they may be taken up in this plain and undeniable paraphrase: Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; so that the times of refreshing by the gospel may come upon you from the presence of the Lord; and he may send Jesus Christ in the preaching of the gospel to you, to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."—*Lightfoot*. "The connection of this with the exhortation to repentance lies thus. Should Christ come again in judgment upon the Jews, foretold Matt. xxiv., while you lie impenitent in your sins, his coming must be the greatest judgment in the world (and so it will be to the impenitent Jews, utter destruction and devastation); that therefore that coming of his (which as it is a terrible time to the impenitent, so is a time of deliverance to all penitent believers), may in that notion of consolation and deliverance befall you, that God may thus send his Son to you, do you now timely repent, so as to have your sins blotted out."—*Hammond*. "Dr. Lightfoot contends, and so ought all, that this phrase should be translated, 'that the times of refreshing may come.' *Anapsuchis* (ἀναψύχισ) signifies a breathing time, or respite, and may be here applied to the space that elapsed from this time till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This was a time of respite, which God gave them to repent of their sins, and be converted to himself."—*Clarke*.

20. And he shall send, &c. That is, by the preaching of his gospel and the operation of his Spirit. The apostles, in his name, both preached and wrought righteousness, that men might be brought from darkness to light, and turned from sin to holiness, and thus be made partakers of rest and peace. ¶ Which before was preached, &c. That is, by the prophets of old, who had spoken of the times of the Messiah as days of rest to the virtuous, and ultimately beneficial to the whole human race. Griesbach, Knapp, and others,

Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution

read *appointed* or *designated*, instead of *preached*; and this reading is now generally approved. The sense, however, is not materially affected by this change of reading. God had appointed or designated his Son to this glorious work, and had instructed his prophets to make known that fact to mankind.

21. Whom the heaven must receive. Rather, must retain. That is, it is proper (such is the force of the original) that the heaven should retain Jesus Christ, until the time specified. This would seem to have been said in reference to the fancy so fondly cherished by the Jews, that, when the Messiah should come, he would establish a temporal kingdom, and personally reign on earth for ever. On this ground it was difficult to perceive that Jesus was the true Messiah, as he had been cut off from the earth by crucifixion. The disciples themselves had experienced the same difficulty. See note on Luke xxiv. 21. Peter therefore urges, in answer to this objection which might arise in the minds of his hearers, that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and received up into heaven; and that it was proper he should there remain personally, while the great work which he had commenced should be carried forward by his apostles and disciples under the influence of his spirit. ¶ Until the times of restitution, &c. "Or, 'the accomplishment of all things;' and to that sense the Syriac translates it, 'until the fulness of the time of all things.' And the Arabic did not much differ, 'until the time in which all things shall be perfected,' or finished. The Greek word, indeed, signifieth a 'restoration to a former estate,' 'a repairing,' or 'an amending,' as might be frequently showed in Greek writers; but, in scripture, doth not so properly signify this, as what the Rabbins would express by a 'fulfilling,' or 'accomplishing.'"—*Lightfoot*. The word *apokatastasis* (ἀποκατάστασις), here rendered restitution, does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. But the verb from which it is derived, *apokathistēmi* (ἀποκαθίστημι), is found in eight places, and uniformly translated *restore*, but

of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began.

with various shades of meaning. It sometimes indicates a restoration to a former state, as in Matt. xii. 13; Mark iii. 5; viii. 25; Luke vi. 10; once a return from long absence, Heb. xiii. 19; once, the establishment of a kingdom, Acts i. 6; and twice, the work of John the Baptist, Matt. xvii. 11; Mark ix. 12. As applied to the kingdom which the disciples desired Jesus to restore, we cannot understand it to mean a restoration to a former state; for no Jew believed that his nation had ever been so gloriously exalted as it would be during the reign of the Messiah. And it is not believed that, when John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, he restored all things to their primitive condition; but rather he accomplished all things predicted concerning him. See note on Matt. xvii. 11. And such seems to be the meaning of the word in the text. The heaven should retain Jesus, until the accomplishment of all things predicted concerning this period. ¶ *Of all things.* That is, of all things predicted by the prophets, belonging to this subject. One of those predictions is cited, as a sample, in ver. 22, 23. This is one of those general expressions which must necessarily be limited by the subject to which it is applied. ¶ *Since the world began.* Or, from the beginning. "Greek, *from the age*, that is, from the time when God began to speak by the mouths of his prophets, one of which number Moses was, ver. 22."—*Pearce*. By this appeal to the prophets, Peter reminded the Jews that the truths he proclaimed were perfectly consistent with that testimony which they admitted to be divine and authoritative. Their own prophets had foretold the events which had occurred, and those also which were near at hand. Not only had they predicted the consummation of the Messiah's reign, but also many wonderful events which should attend its commencement; these last were now in process of fulfilment, and should be perfectly accomplished before Jesus should return from the heavens.

22. *Moses truly said, &c.* See Deut. xviii. 15—19. The great ancient prophet of the Jews, who was honored

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your

above all others, had predicted the appearance of another Prophet, in terms which indicated that new revelations would be made by him, and condign punishment be executed on his adversaries. Of this fact, Peter reminded the Jews, that they might the more readily believe on Jesus, and escape the penalty of unbelief and rebellion. ¶ *Unto the fathers.* The remote progenitors of the Jews; those who sojourned in the wilderness with Moses. ¶ *A Prophet.* It is the general opinion of commentators, that this prediction had reference to the long succession of prophets, who appeared among the Jews, after the days of Moses, rather than to Jesus in particular; and that Peter applied the language to Jesus alone, because he was the last of the line, and far more powerful and glorious than any of his predecessors. But the original prediction seems peculiarly applicable to Jesus, so far as similarity to Moses and the consequences of rejecting him are involved. ¶ *Of your brethren.* Their prophets should be of their own nation, so that they might learn the divine will, without travelling to distant lands. Moreover, they would naturally have more confidence in one of the chosen race, than in any other. Jesus was not only of this race, of the seed of Abraham, but also of the family of David, according to the flesh; for of this stock was his mother descended. ¶ *Like unto me.* Many suppose the similarity strictly relates only to the fact that Jesus was inspired, like Moses, to communicate the divine will; or that he was raised up in like manner, by special providence of God. But there are many other points of similarity, which are too important and interesting to be overlooked, whether they were originally comprehended in the prediction or not. Both Jesus and Moses were lawgivers, and the founders of new systems of religion; no other Jewish prophet was. Both enjoyed direct intercourse with God; to others he revealed himself in dreams and visions. Both were providentially preserved from slaughter, in infancy. Exod. i. 22; ii. 1—10; Matt. ii. 16. Both were obliged to depart from home, to escape death; Exod. ii. 15; Matt.

brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that*

ii. 13; and both were recalled by divine admonition. Exod. iv. 19; Matt. ii. 20. Both wrought miracles. Both exercised the power of a king: one, over the Jews; the other, over all men. Both fasted forty days before promulgating the law. Exod. xxiv. 18; Matt. iv. 1, 2. After receiving divine communications, the faces of both were miraculously illuminated. Ex. xxxiv. 35; Matt. xvii. 2, 3. Each appointed seventy special officers; Numb. xi. 24, 25; Luke x. 1; and the spirit in each was communicated to these chosen servants. Moses was willing to die for his people, and Jesus did thus die. Exod. xxxii. 32; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9. As perpetual monuments, Moses instituted the Passover; and Jesus, the Lord's supper; both of which were designed to commemorate deliverances attended by the shedding of blood. Exod. ch. xii.; Matt. xxvi. 26—30. Both were sent to a wicked and rebellious people; and it is remarkable that the people endured similar calamities about forty years after each commenced his ministry; the ancient Jews all perishing in the wilderness, except Caleb and Joshua, and the modern Jews being overwhelmed in the destruction of Jerusalem, a small remnant only being preserved. To this last-named fact, there is manifest reference in ver. 23. ¶ *Him shall ye hear.* That is, you shall listen to his instructions, and obey them, as of divine authority. ¶ *In all things, whatsoever.* &c. Jesus is entitled to implicit obedience in all things. Whoso refuses to obey, refuses at his peril.

23. *It shall come to pass,* &c. The quotation from Moses is not literally exact, but the sense is preserved. ¶ *Every soul—destroyed,* &c. In the original prediction, the language is, "Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Deut. xviii. 19. The sense is, I will hold him accountable, I will punish him, if he shall not obey my word, spoken by my prophet. A common method of punishment, under the Mosaic dispensation, was to cut off the offenders from among the people. See Lev. xvii. 10; xviii.

every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets

29; xx. 3, 6. This cutting off some times denotes excommunication, or exclusion from ecclesiastical and civil privileges; but often it denotes the destruction of life. In this sense, Peter evidently understood the punishment here indicated. And instead of quoting literally, that God would "require it," of those who should reject Jesus, or hold them accountable and punish them, he changed the phraseology, so as to express at once the kind of punishment which awaited them. And most exactly and memorably was the prediction accomplished, when more than a million of them who rejected Jesus perished in one city.

24. *All the prophets,* &c. That is, the prophets generally. To illustrate the truth of this declaration, it is not absolutely necessary to find a distinct prediction of the events which had occurred, and which were at hand, when Peter delivered this discourse. It is sufficient, that many prophets had spoken "of these days." ¶ *From Samuel.* "He is reckoned the first of the prophets after Moses; first, because prophecy, from the death of Moses to the rising of Samuel, was very rare; and, secondly, because he was the first prophet after Moses, that wrote his prophecy."—*Lightfoot.* To which may be added, as a third reason, that Samuel was the first, after Moses, who is known to have prophesied concerning Jesus. Perhaps Peter may have referred particularly to 2 Sam. vii. 16: he called attention to a similar passage in his former discourse. ¶ *Foretold of these days.* This may be understood, generally, of the glorious days or reign of the Messiah on earth, then commencing, or, perhaps more probably, of the visible manifestation of divine power in those days particularly, when the obedient subjects of Jesus were protected and comforted, and his rebellious enemies cut off and destroyed.

¶ The paraphrase of ver. 19—24, by Dr. Hammond, though not expressed in the most intelligible manner, is worthy of consideration. "Do you therefore amend your lives, that this may be pardoned, so that the second coming of Christ so often spoken of, Matt. xxiv..

from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

for the delivery and rescue of all the faithful, giving them rest from their troubles and persecutions, and a quiet possession of the gospel, but withal for the destruction of all the obdurate (which is therefore foreshowed that all may repent), may by your repentance become matter of advantage and comfort to you; to which end it was that he was at first sent to you Jews peculiarly, or that he is now preached unto you, before that time, that, if ye repent, ye may have the benefit of it, but if not, be destroyed with the obdurate. This Christ being now entered on his regal power in heaven, thereby to fulfil all the prophecies concerning him, particularly that of Moses, of destroying and cutting off from the earth all those Jews that shall reject the Messiah, when he cometh; who being also the persecutors of Christians as they had been before of Christ, their destruction shall consequently bring that refreshment, ver. 10, along with it (as indeed it happened in Vespasian's time; after the destruction of the impenitent Jews, the believers, which were remarkably preserved in that destruction, had halcyonian days attending. See 2 Thess. ii. 1). Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of the coming of the Messiah, the destruction of those that reject, and the special mercies to them that believe on him."

25. In this and the succeeding verse, the apostle announces the great object of Christ's mission. The construction of this discourse deserves careful notice. The attention of the people having been excited by the performance of the miracle, Peter improved the opportunity to proclaim Jesus as the true Messiah. He first assured them, that the lame man was healed by power derived through that same Jesus whom they had wickedly crucified. He who was once ignominiously murdered, now enjoyed a glorious life; for God had raised him from the dead, and exalted him to heaven. Ver. 12—16. Having thus asserted the resurrection and mighty power of Jesus, and exhibited to the Jews their great guilt, in reject-

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying

ing him who had for ages been the hope of their nation, and crucifying the long-expected Messiah, he assured them that, although their guilt was somewhat mitigated by their ignorance of the true character of Jesus, they were nevertheless very criminal. They were consequently exposed to a severe doom, anciently denounced by their own great prophet against all who should not obey the Messiah when he appeared. He therefore exhorted them to repent, and turn from their evil opinions and practices, so that, in common with the faithful, they might escape the destruction which awaited unbelievers. And to remove any scruple which they might entertain, founded on their opinion that the Messiah would personally reign on earth for ever, he reminded them of the propriety that he should remain in heaven until the accomplishment of certain prophecies concerning him; intimating that he would then return, in the manifestation of his mighty power, and make a visible and remarkable distinction between his friends and his enemies. Ver. 17—21. See Matt. xvi. 27, 28; xxiv. 29—35. To impress more forcibly on their minds the fact that such a distinction should be made, he quoted the testimony of Moses, whose authority was unquestioned by them; and assured them that all the prophets concurred in his testimony. Ver. 22—24. Then, and not before, he announced the great object of that ministry to which the Messiah was designated and appointed. It was important, not only that they should know who was the Messiah, but that they should also understand his true character. They had supposed him to be a temporal prince; they needed to learn that his kingdom was to be established in the hearts of men; and that it would exalt its subjects to spiritual glory, by vanquishing their inward foes and purifying their hearts from sin, rather than to earthly glory, by destroying their fellow-men, or subjecting them to the yoke of slavery. This annunciation the apostle reserved for the conclusion of his discourse, that it might make a deeper impression on the hearts of his hearers, after they were somewhat

unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you first, God having

softened by the previous contemplation of their guilt and danger. ¶ *Ye are the children.* Or, sons. This word does not necessarily denote lineal descendants; but it often means no more than followers or disciples, which is manifestly its meaning here. See note on Matt. i. 1. ¶ *Of the prophets.* Namely, the holy men who had for many ages spoken to the Jews, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. ¶ *And of the covenant.* Ye are children of the covenant, or interested in its provisions. The covenant was designed for the benefit of the children as well as of the fathers. "The word *covenant* denotes properly a compact or agreement between equals, or those who have a right to make such a compact, and choose or refuse the terms. When applied to God and man, it denotes a *firm promise* on the part of God; a pledge to be regarded with all the sacredness of a compact, that he will do certain things on certain conditions."—*Barnes*. Yet it must be remembered, that, although the ancient covenant given through Moses had certain conditions with which the Jews did not comply, God solemnly declared that he would not make another covenant of the same kind, but would establish his new covenant on a more firm foundation. See Heb. viii. 6—12. This, indeed, was the character of the covenant or promise to Abraham, being unconditional, and confirmed by the oath of Jehovah. Heb. vi. 13—20. Hence it was, that the law, given four hundred and thirty years afterwards, securing certain blessings upon certain conditions, could not render the previous covenant void or ineffectual. Gal. iii. 14—17. This unchangeable and absolute covenant is that which Peter here assures the Jews belonged to them as well as to their fathers. ¶ *Which God made with our fathers.* Namely, by his promise to Abraham, which immediately follows. ¶ *Saying unto Abraham.* See Gen. xxii. 18. ¶ *In thy seed.* "Which is Christ." Gal. iii. 16. ¶ *Shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.* Namely, by being turned away from their iniquities, as expressed in the succeeding

raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

verse; or, which is the same thing, being saved from their sins. See note on Matt. i. 21. There is a peculiarity in Peter's manner of quoting this promise, which should not escape notice. He does not say that all the *nations* (ἐθνη, *ethnē*) of the earth shall be blessed, according to the precise terms of the promise to Abraham; nor all the *families* (φυλαί, *phulai*) of the earth, as expressed in the repetition of the promise to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 14; but he uses a term different from either, saying that God had promised to bless all the *kindreds* (πατριάι, *patriai*) of the earth, in the seed of Abraham, which is Christ. This variation of words is easily accounted for. Peter designed to express the true idea contained in the promise; and it was immaterial whether he used the precise words or not, provided that his language should be comprehensive enough to express the full import of the promise. And what more comprehensive terms can be found than those which are used? Whether Peter at that time apprehended the full extent of the promise, may be doubted; but that his version expresses its true spirit, is beyond all question.

26. *Unto you first.* The Jews, among other peculiar privileges, heard the first annunciation of the gospel of peace. Our Lord confined his personal ministry to them; and he required his apostles, at first, to do likewise. Their commission was afterwards enlarged, and they were commanded to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15. ¶ *Having raised up.* This probably does not refer to the resurrection of Jesus, but to his appointment as the Messiah. ¶ *Jesus.* Omitted by Griesbach, and marked as spurious by Knapp. ¶ *To bless you.* Namely, according to the ancient covenant which was confirmed to Abraham by an oath. ¶ *In turning away every one, &c.* This is a blessing characteristic of the Giver, and honorable to the Mediator. This is true salvation; the only salvation worthy the name; a salvation, not *in* sin, but *from* sin. To accomplish this salvation on behalf of all men, to finish

## CHAPTER IV.

AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the

sin, to establish universal righteousness, to deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, our Saviour labored and taught, died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven; and he will continue to carry forward the glorious work, until every knee shall bow in his name, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 10, 11.

## CHAPTER IV.

1. *As they spake.* Rather, while they were speaking. The division into chapters, in this place, is wholly arbitrary: the narrative continues without interruption. ¶ *The priests.* The same who had so steadily and so bitterly opposed the Master: they now commenced a like opposition to the disciples. There is no evidence that this assault upon the liberty of the apostles was tumultuous; but it seems rather like an attempt to control them by the forms of law. The reference to the same persons in ver. 5—8, indicates them as members of the supreme ecclesiastical tribunal. See note on Matt. v. 22. ¶ *Captain of the temple.* After the Jews were subjected to the power of Rome, the emperor kept soldiers in Jerusalem, who were stationed in various parts of the city. One band, under its captain, was stationed in the tower of Antonia, near the temple. To this officer, as some think, reference is here made. Others suppose the chief of the guard of Levites is intended, who had charge of the sacred things belonging to the temple, and whose duty it was to preserve order. On either supposition, it was a person appointed to prevent any tumult or disorder in the temple and its various courts, having under his command a number of men sufficient to enforce his authority in ordinary cases. As such a multitude surrounded the apostles, and manifested so much excitement, it was perhaps apprehended that there would be some improper confusion or riotous conduct.

captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through

At least, it would be easy for the priests so to represent the matter, and to claim the interference of the captain of the temple. ¶ *And the Sadducees.* This sect denied that there should be any resurrection from the dead. It is said that many of the ecclesiastical rulers, at that time, were Sadducees. This fact is intimated in Acts v. 17. See note on Matt. iii. 7.

2. *Being grieved.* This word occurs only here and in Acts xvi. 18; and it indicates grief mingled with indignation. It would seem that the indignation of the priests and others, at the success of the apostles, was so intense as to become oppressively painful.

¶ *Taught the people.* They were indignant that the apostles should presume to teach, without their license; and the more so, because their teaching was effectual. This state of feeling has often been manifested by those who have claimed to be the exclusively commissioned teachers of religion. The only proper question is, not by what priesthood was a man taught or commissioned to preach, but does he preach the truth? Does he preach as the oracles of God, and rightly interpret the Scriptures? If he do this in honesty and sincerity, the blessing of God will be upon him; and he need not fear the indignation of men. And they who captiously oppose such a teacher will be found fighting against God. Acts v. 39. ¶ *Preached through Jesus the resurrection, &c.* The doctrine proclaimed by the apostles was very disagreeable to the Jewish priests and their associates. Perhaps they would have been less indignant at the unauthorized preaching of Peter and the others, had their doctrine been of a different character. But the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, and were unwilling to have it preached; and the Pharisees, though they expected a future life, were unwilling that it should be preached through Jesus, whom they had despised, opposed, and crucified. All saw that an impression was made on the people; many already believed that Jesus had risen, and were ready to credit the apostles when they taught in

Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4 Howbeit, many of them which heard the word, believed; and the

his name. Their own popularity was at stake; and they resolved on another effort to crush the obnoxious cause.

3. *Laid hands on them.* They did not attempt to deny the facts, or answer the arguments, advanced by the apostles; but they resorted to brute force, for the accomplishment of their object. Force may be legally used for the preservation of the public peace, and the safety of the community, when argument and persuasion have been exhausted and proved ineffectual; but whoso resorts to force, without first employing other means, betrays his want of confidence in the justice of his cause. In a fair field, it need never be feared that falsehood will triumph over truth. ¶ *Put them in hold.* Imprisoned them. ¶ *Even-tide.* Evening. It was not customary for the Sanhedrim to assemble in the evening, though such a session was held for the destruction of Jesus. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 57; xxvii. 1.

4. *Howbeit.* An obsolete word, meaning *but*, or *notwithstanding*. ¶ *Heard the word.* That is, heard the discourse of Peter, recorded in the preceding chapter. The historian here mentions the result of that discourse, before giving an account of what was done by the opposers. ¶ *Believed.* They believed the testimony of the apostles, that Jesus was raised from the dead, and that he was thus demonstrated to be the Son of God. Believing this, they of course believed him to be a teacher of truth, and became his disciples. ¶ *Of the men.* Of the persons, namely, who believed. ¶ *Was about five thousand.* Or, was made about five thousand. Some understand this to mean that about two thousand were converted on this occasion, making the whole number of believers, up to this time, about five thousand. But when it is considered that the narrative is confined to the events of this day, without reference to the day of Pentecost, and the historian mentions

number of the men was about five thousand.

5 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alex-

the number who believed the word, or were converted by the word, which obviously means the discourse of Peter, it seems more natural to understand him as giving the number of new converts. If this be the true interpretation, then it follows that the whole number converted on these two days was about eight thousand. Such was the mighty power with which the apostles testified the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Mark xvi. 20. The marvellous events which had recently occurred, the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, of which the apostles declared themselves witnesses, and the miracles which they wrought in his name, all conspired to produce a more powerful impression on the public mind than can be expected at the present day. The age of miracles is passed. And men are now converted by a slower process. God be praised, that the truth remains effectual to the conversion of some.

5. *Rulers.* Namely, rulers of the Jews. Probably these, as well as the elders and scribes, were members of the Sanhedrim. See note on Matt. v. 22. Their title denotes that they exercised authority. Perhaps they were eminent rulers of synagogues, who also held seats in the Sanhedrim. See note on Matt. iv. 23. ¶ *Elders.* Religious teachers, so denominated from their age or gravity. ¶ *Scribes.* Religious teachers also; but, as their title indicates, much employed in writing. As there was then no method known of multiplying copies of the scriptures, except by writing, many of this class might find employment. They were accustomed, however, not only to transcribe the law, but also to interpret it, after their manner.

6. *Annas, the high priest.* See note on John xviii. 13. ¶ *Caiaphas.* See note on Luke iii. 2. It would seem that Annas was particularly mentioned,



ander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name have ye done this?

because he was formerly high priest (and still called by that title), and, in consequence of having held that high office, had much influence with the people. ¶ *John and Alexander.* Attempts have been made to identify these individuals with persons known in Jewish history; but nothing beyond conjecture is the result. We may safely suppose from the manner in which they are mentioned, that they were persons exercising much influence in Jerusalem, and not improbably members of the Sanhedrim. *Kindred of the high priest.* It does not distinctly appear whether these were members of the Sanhedrim, or whether they assembled to excite that body to prompt action, and to countenance their violent proceedings. Some suppose they were relatives of the high priest; but Schleusner understands *genous* (γένους), rendered *kindred*, to indicate order or rank, and that the persons mentioned were those who had previously attained the dignity of the high priesthood. Possibly no more is intended, than that they were of kindred opinion and character. ¶ *At Jerusalem.* The place where this great council usually assembled; though, on extraordinary occasions, they sometimes held their sessions elsewhere.

7. *Set them.* Namely, the apostles, who had been kept "in hold" since the preceding evening. ¶ *In the midst.* As the Sanhedrim sat in a semicircle, prisoners or others who were placed in the area might properly be represented as in the midst of the council. See note on Matt. v. 22. ¶ *By what power.* The same question was proposed to our Lord by the same class of men. Matt. xxi. 23. ¶ *By what name.* They did not dispute the reality of the miracle; but they demanded by what name it was wrought. At least, Peter replies to the question as if this were its purport. But perhaps they designed to pass the miracle in silence, and to demand only by what authority or in

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

whose name the apostles preached the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ; for this was what especially grieved them, ver. 2, and what they forbade to be repeated, ver. 17, 18. As, however, they did not distinctly specify the actual point of their charge, it was perfectly proper that Peter should reply as he did; because the Jews entertained the opinion that miracles might be performed by pronouncing some powerful name. "So did they very foolishly conceit, that the very naming some names might do wonders, as Acts xix. 13; and the Talmud forgeth, that Ben Satda (they have a blasphemous meaning in this expression) 'wrought miracles, by putting the unutterable name within the skin of his foot, and there sewing it up.'"—*Light-foot.* See also note on Matt. xii. 27.

8. *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* Under the influence and guidance of divine wisdom and power. The apostles still remained under the influence of that spirit which was poured upon them on the day of Pentecost, enabling them not only to speak with tongues and perform other miracles, but to proclaim the truth with a power which none could gainsay or resist. Luke xxi. 15. ¶ *Rulers—elders.* See ver. 5. By this form of address, Peter manifested proper respect for the constituted authority, acknowledged the court to be one of high dignity and power, and intimated to them their vast responsibility. They could not, like the common people, plead ignorance. Their official standing required them to be familiar with the scriptures, and to be competent to discern the true marks of divine power. Moreover, they were more guilty than others of the crime alleged in ver. 10; for they had power sufficient to have prevented the crucifixion of Jesus, but had actually used it for the accomplishment of the bloody deed.

9. *If we this day be examined, &c.* He puts the case hypothetically, as if

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God

it were uncertain whether the charge had reference to the miracle or to the preaching. See note on ver. 7. He preferred to answer in regard to the miracle; and for a good reason. By establishing the fact that a miracle had been performed "by the name of Jesus," the fact of his resurrection was confirmed; and if God had raised him from the dead, the propriety of preaching in his name was perfectly obvious. ¶ *The good deed.* The miraculous cure of the cripple. The act performed, instead of being a crime deserving punishment, was a *good deed*, a benevolent act. By this quiet but very significant remark, the unreasonable opposition of the rulers was severely rebuked.

10. *Be it known, &c.* The declaration is in the most positive terms. Peter does not attempt to evade the question, nor profess to have less knowledge on the subject than his judges. He uses respectful terms, in addressing them, ver. 8; but, as to the facts in the case, he states them with startling distinctness and boldness, ver. 13. ¶ *By the name, &c.* That is, by the power or authority. The council had inquired "by what name" the apostles had done that of which they were alleged to be guilty, ver. 7; Peter replies in the same terms, coming directly to the point, and giving an answer which could not be misunderstood. ¶ *Jesus Christ.* This use of the word *Christ* must have been offensive to the council, because Christ means the same as Messiah, which was probably the word used by Peter, speaking in the language of the Jews. This, therefore, was a positive assertion that the same Jesus, in whose name the miracle had been performed, was the true Messiah, — a fact which the Jewish priests denied, and were disposed to suppress even by violence and murder. ¶ *Of Nazareth.* That there might be no possible mistake, Peter asserts that Jesus the Messiah was the same who had been known and crucified as Jesus of Nazareth. ¶ *Whom ye crucified.* There is an awful directness and energy in this charge. Peter had before

raised from the dead, *even by him* doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was

accused the people of the same crime, Acts iii. 15; and they were guilty, in so far that they had been seduced and persuaded to clamor for the crucifixion of our Lord, Matt. xxvii. 20, 23; but the persons now addressed were the instigators and chief instruments of this wickedness; and the apostle, in language which must have made their hearts quail and quake, distinctly charges upon them the guilt of blood. Yet all this was done in such a manner, that they had no just cause of offence. They required the apostles to declare by what name they had "done this;" and Peter replied, distinctly and unequivocally, that it was done in the name of that Jesus whom they had crucified. ¶ *Whom God raised from the dead.* See notes on Acts ii. 24; iii. 15. This fact, so unplesant to the council, because it involved their condemnation for the crime of rejecting and crucifying him whom God had demonstrated to be his Son, the Messiah, by raising him from the dead, the apostle repeats in the most positive manner. He had good reason to be positive: he personally knew the fact, having seen his Lord living, and ascending to heaven, after he came forth from the tomb; he also knew that this fact was at the very foundation of Christianity, and that he must convince the council of this, if he would produce any good impression on their hearts. ¶ *Doth this man stand here before you whole.* That is, healed from the infirmity by which he was formerly crippled and disabled. The man who had been healed adhered closely to Peter and John, Acts iii. 11; and, if he were not apprehended and imprisoned with them, he sought them early in the morning, and appeared with them before the council. He was there, as a living witness of the power which God had communicated through his Son to his disciples. The evidence of the miracle was conclusive and undeniable, ver. 16; and it was useless to deny the assertion, that the power to perform it was communicated through Jesus the Messiah.

11. *This is the stone, &c.* See Ps.

set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other

name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned

cxviii. 22, and note on Matt. xxi. 42. The Jews had rejected and despised Jesus; but God had constituted him the most important stone of the edifice.

12. *Neither is there salvation, &c.* Some have supposed the word *sotēria* (σωτηρία), rendered *salvation*, means, in this place, deliverance from disease and bodily infirmity. The arguments in favor of this interpretation are certainly worthy of consideration. (1.) Similar forms of speech occur elsewhere in the Scriptures. "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole (*sōthēsomai, σωθήσομαι, I shall be saved*); — thy faith hath made thee whole, (*sesōke, σέσωκέ, hath saved thee*); and the woman was made whole (*csōthē, ἐσώθη, was saved*) from that hour." Matt. ix. 21, 22. (2.) The subject of discourse here is the healing of the lame man, and the power or name by which he was healed. "If we be examined — by what means he is made whole" (*sesōstai, σέσωσται, is saved*), ver. 9. Peter replies that the man was made whole, or saved, by the name of Jesus, whom the Jews had despised and crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead and exalted; and then adds, that there is no such healing efficacy in any other name. The Jews had a fancy that mighty cures might be wrought by pronouncing powerful names; and some of them insinuated that Jesus himself performed miracles in this manner, having learned the most sacred name of God. Peter tells them that all such fancies are vain; and that miracles of healing can be performed only by power derived through Jesus, the Messiah, or in his name. Such is the substance of the interpretation of this passage by Whitby, Pearce, and others; and it has the merit of representing the apostle as pursuing one principal idea through his whole address. But others prefer to understand in this place, spiritual healing or salvation. Whatever were the original design of the words, they are doubtless as true in this sense as in any other. "The Father sent the Son to be the

Saviour of the world," 1 John iv. 14; and for the accomplishment of that work, the Son gave himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man, 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9; and therefore God hath promised that in the name of Jesus all knees shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 10, 11. So that it is true, in this as well as in any other sense, that salvation can be expected only through Jesus, the anointed Son of God; and, blessed be the Father of mercies, abundant provision is made in him for the benefit of all; for "he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" 1 John ii. 2; and God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4. ¶ *None other name.* It is vain to look for miraculous healing power, to be exerted by any other name; or, it is vain to look for spiritual health or salvation, to any other source than the grace of God manifested in his Son. ¶ *Under heaven given among men.* That is, no person on earth has had this fulness of power communicated to him, except Jesus Christ; and the power now exerted by us is derived through him. This phrase qualifies the declaration, "neither is there salvation in any other;" that is, any other *on earth*, not intending to exclude God, who is the original source of all salvation from bodily disease, spiritual maladies, or aught else.

13. *When they saw the boldness &c.* The word here rendered *boldness* signifies rather plainness, openness, distinctness, in opposition to concealment or indirectness, or speaking by parables. It occurs in John vii. 4, 13, 26; x. 24; xvi. 25, 29; xviii. 20; Acts ii. 29; iv. 29, 31. Peter and John did not attempt, by any evasion or concealment, or figures of speech, to screen themselves from danger; but, in the most distinct and positive terms, asserted the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and declared that God had constituted him

and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

the only medium through whom salvation should be bestowed. But the translation conveys a correct idea; for nothing short of the most unshrinking fortitude and boldness, founded on a firm confidence in the divine protection, could have enabled the apostles to bear this distinct and unequivocal testimony. They knew that the same tribunal had very recently adjudged their Master worthy of death, and had procured him to be crucified by the civil government. They knew the members of that tribunal would be highly exasperated, when charged with the murder of Jesus. They knew their own lives would be placed in peril, so far as human agency was concerned, by testifying the truth openly. Yet they did not hesitate to witness a good confession, and to speak the truth in all honesty and plainness, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear. Can any person doubt the honesty of Peter and John? Can any one doubt that they firmly believed what they uttered? Peter had recently been terrified beyond measure, by the question of a mere girl: he now beards the lion in his den, and charges on his powerful adversaries the guilt of murder. What, except unwavering faith, could have wrought this change in him? ¶ *Of Peter and John.* Though Peter alone addressed the council, John, with equal fortitude, signified his concurrence in the things spoken. ¶ *Unlearned.* That is, in the literature of the Jews. They had been taught the principles of truth by their Master, and were now assisted by the Holy Spirit; but the circumstances attending their early life had prevented them from becoming thoroughly conversant with the traditions of the elders, and the sophistries by which falsehood had been made to take the place of truth. And the Jews regarded all such persons as unlearned and despicable. John vii. 49. ¶ *Ignorant men.* "This word properly denotes those who live in private, in contradistinction from those who are engaged in public life, or in office. As this class of persons is commonly also supposed to be less learned, talented, and refined,

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

than those in office, it comes to denote those who are rude and illiterate. The idea intended to be conveyed here is, that these men had not had opportunity of education (comp. Matt. iv. 18—21), and had not been accustomed to public speaking; and hence they were surprised at their boldness."—*Barnes.* ¶ *They marvelled.* They were not usually addressed with such freedom and plainness, even by their most learned scribes; and they were filled with astonishment, that these poor Galileans manifested so much self-possession, and so little dread, when speaking in the presence of the most august and powerful tribunal of the nation. ¶ *Took knowledge.* Perceived; knew. It is not stated definitely how they obtained knowledge that the apostles had been with Jesus. But the construction of the sentence indicates that they were convinced of the fact, by the miracle which the apostles had performed, and especially by their boldness and freedom of speech; rightly judging that they could not perform miracles without divine assistance, and that they could not be so bold, unless they had been with Jesus, and knew beyond doubt that he had risen from the dead. ¶ *Had been with Jesus.* That is, had been his followers and disciples. But more than this is implied; for Peter had been a disciple and a follower of Jesus before he profanely denied him; so had all the other disciples, before they forsook him and fled. Their present boldness furnished evidence, not only that they believed him to be the Messiah before he was crucified, but that they believed, without a shadow of doubt, that he had risen from the dead, and ascended to God.

14. *Could say nothing against it.* They saw standing before them a living witness of the power which the apostles exercised in the name of Jesus,—a man who was never able to stand, until that miracle was performed. They dared not deny the reality of the cure, and they could not, at the moment, frame any argument in opposition to that of the apostles, which should be satisfactory even to themselves.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly

threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

15. *Commanded them, &c.* It was customary to remove the prisoner, while the court conferred respecting a decision. But in this case a peculiar reason operated, to make a secret consultation desirable. The members of the court were obliged to admit that the facts alleged by the apostles were true, and consequently that they were not guilty of any crime; and the only question which remained was, how they could be silenced. But this was a question which could not be discussed publicly.

16. *What shall we do, &c.* This was a serious question. Perhaps it occurred to them, that the sanguinary method they had adopted with the Master had recoiled on their own heads; and they might fear to destroy the lives of the disciples, lest in their place should rise up many more witnesses. But something must be done. They would gladly have denied the reality of the miracle; but it was known to thousands, or, as they expressed it, to all that dwelt in Jerusalem. Some other course, therefore, was necessary; and what that should be, was the question.

¶ *Notable miracle.* A well-known, undeniable miracle. The original word is different from that which occurs in Acts ii. 20; but the same which is used in Acts iv. 10; ix. 42; xv. 18; uniformly rendered *known*.

17. *But that it spread no further, &c.* They did not attempt to convict the apostles of falsehood, as to matters of fact; for the attempt was hopeless. Nor did they attempt to convince them of error in religious opinion. But they prohibited the further proclamation of the facts, and the inculcation of the religious opinions, which they had the sagacity to perceive would be fatal to that form of religion, at the head of which they stood. ¶ *Let us straitly*

*threaten them, &c.* A Hebraism, literally rendered, Let us threaten them with a threat. This threat was implied in the command in ver. 18; for it was understood, if the apostles failed to obey, they would incur the displeasure of the Sanhedrim, and become exposed to any punishment which that council could inflict. This was the only remedy they could then devise to protect themselves, and silence the apostles.

18. *Commanded them, &c.* Namely, on penalty of their highest displeasure. Subsequently, they added stripes to threats, Acts v. 40; but for the present they only forbade the apostles to teach the doctrines of Jesus, or to proclaim his resurrection, or in any way instruct, as his disciples.

19. *Peter and John answered.* Hitherto it would seem, Peter alone had spoken, in justification of what they had done; while John silently assented to the truth of his remarks. But when threatened, in order to enforce their silence in future, each answered for himself; professing allegiance to a higher power than the Sanhedrim; and appealing to their judges whether obedience should be rendered to the one or the other, when their claims thus conflicted. The amiable and affectionate John, the peculiarly beloved disciple, was as firm and resolute in the performance of his duty, as the more sanguine and impetuous Peter. ¶ *Whether it be right, &c.* This was the true issue. They did not inquire, which would be most politic or expedient; but which would be right. What does duty require? what is right? is the great question for every man to settle and regard, if he would preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. To be sure, the right is always politic, expedient, and attended by the least difficulty,

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So, when they had further threatened them, they let them go,

on the whole, or in the end. But these terms generally refer to the immediate consequences of actions; and in this light, there often appears to be a difference between expediency and right. ¶ *In the sight of God.* Not, how do men regard this matter? not, which will be most pleasing to you? but, which is right in the sight of God, who sees the secrets of all hearts, and is the Judge of all? ¶ *To hearken, &c.* That is, to pay attention to, or to regard; the idea is, to obey. ¶ *Unto you more than unto God.* A plain declaration that what the Sanhedrim required was contrary to the divine commands; for if the two had concurred, there would have been no occasion for the question. In the name of his Father, Jesus had commanded his disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; the Jewish council commanded them to abstain from preaching the gospel. Which should they obey? ¶ *Judge ye.* An appeal is made to the judges, who professed to regard God as the Sovereign Ruler, and who derived their authority from him to convene as a council. They would not dare to represent their authority as superior to his, or to say that it would be right to disobey him, for the sake of obeying them. Indeed, they returned no answer to the implied question; but, inconsistently enough, repeated their threats. In this instance the apostles exhibited a noble example of devotion to the divine will, and firmness in the performance of duty. Yet Christians, who would imitate them, should see to it, that they do not mistake their own wilfulness for a spirit of devotion to God's will, lest they be found to resist the constituted authorities improperly. See 1 Peter ii. 13—20.

20. *For we cannot but speak, &c.* In these few but distinct and unequivocal words, the apostles defined their position. They appealed to the Jewish rulers, to judge for themselves whether human or divine authority were of more binding force; but announced their own convictions and determination

finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty

in respectful but positive and absolute terms. They held themselves under obligation to speak the things which they had seen and heard, to testify the facts which they knew to be true, to proclaim the resurrection and ascension of their Lord, and to preach his gospel to all the world; and this they had resolved to do, at whatever hazard.

21. *Further threatened them.* See note on ver. 17. They again commanded the apostles to remain silent, and to make no further attempt to spread this heresy among the people, on pain of their highest displeasure. The remainder of the verse explains the reason why they dismissed the prisoners without severe punishment. ¶ *Ending nothing, &c.* They could devise no method to punish the disciples, without exciting the indignation of the people; and this they were fearful to encounter. It is a mercy of God, that earthly rulers, however corrupt and ungodly, are oftentimes restrained from executing all their wicked designs, through fear of the people. Especially is this true in civilized lands, where rulers seldom venture beyond the point at which they believe the people will sustain them. ¶ *For all men, &c.* That is, the great mass of them who were then assembled in Jerusalem. The miracle had been publicly wrought, and was benevolent in its character. It was useless to deny the fact, which was known to so many. It was a hopeless task to persuade the people that the apostles deserved punishment, for restoring a lame man to soundness, or for acknowledging that they did it, not by their own power or holiness, but by the power of him who had been crucified and had been raised from the dead. Instead of regarding this as a crime, the people glorified God for the kindness and grace which he had displayed. While the people were in this frame of mind, the rulers dared not resort to extreme violence, lest they should be resisted. Hence, unwillingly doubtless, they suffered the apostles to depart unharmed.

22. *For the man, &c.* The age of

years old on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23 ¶ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God

the person, "on whom this miracle of healing was showed," is added, as furnishing a reason why the miracle itself was so manifest in the eyes of all the people. It was not performed on a child, not generally known; but on a man of mature age, whom the worshippers at the temple had been accustomed to see, and with whose infirmity they had long been acquainted. He had been lame from his birth, Acts iii. 2, and had been daily seen at the gate of the temple for many years; and it is not credible that the Jews, proverbial for their shrewdness and love of money, would have lavished alms so long on an impostor, without detecting the cheat.

23. *They went to their own company.* That is, to the company of the apostles and believers. ¶ *Reported all*, &c. Doubtless their brethren awaited the result of this trial with great anxiety. The whole matter was narrated, and the indignation and threatenings of the rulers made known. With child-like confidence, the whole company commended themselves to the divine protection, and implored that their strength might be equal to their day; as follows in ver. 24—30.

24. *They lifted up*, &c. They prayed. *To lift up the voice* is a common Hebrew expression to denote the vocal utterance of emotion. Thus Jacob lifted up his voice and wept; Gen. xxix. 11; that is, his weeping was accompanied by lamentation. Thus the Levites were required to lift up the voice with joy; 1 Chron. xv. 16; that is, to sing praises to God. Thus to lift up the voice for understanding, Prov. ii. 3, indicates an earnest inquiry, or an importunate asking. The phrase has an intensity, denoting somewhat more than mere speaking. ¶ *With one accord*. Probably one of the number uttered the prayer, in which all the others heartily and devoutly united. Their cause was one; they shared the same peril; they were equally depend-

with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;

25 Who, by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

ent on divine aid and protection; and moreover, their hearts were knit together by that spirit of love which is characteristic of true Christianity. See John xvii. 21, 22. ¶ *Lord*. The word *despota* (δέσποτα), here used, is not often applied to God. But it expresses more unlimited power and authority than the word more generally answering to the English *lord*. ¶ *Thou art God*, &c. In the commencement of their prayer, they very properly acknowledged the sovereignty of God: he who made all things is the unquestioned disposer of all events. Indeed, none can pray, in full faith and confidence, without an abiding conviction that God is able to do all his pleasure, and that nothing can successfully resist his will. ¶ *Which made heaven*, &c. Nearly a literal transcript of Psalm cxlvi. 6. See also Gen. ch. i; Rev. iv. 11. The use of scriptural forms of speech in prayer is doubly advantageous; as our desires, or confidence, or confessions, or thanksgivings, may very generally be thus more forcibly expressed than otherwise, and as we thus acknowledge our faith in the scriptures and our reliance on the divine promises.

25. *Of thy servant David*, &c. The second Psalm, from which the succeeding quotation is made, does not bear the name of its author; but we here have the testimony of one who spake as he was moved by the Spirit, that it was written by David, and that it was written by inspiration: the words were written by the king of Israel, but they were suggested to his mind by the King of kings. ¶ *Heathen*. Or, nations. This term was used by the Jews, like *heathen* by Christians, to indicate those who did not worship the true God. ¶ *Rage*. This word denotes a tumultuous excitement and angry commotion, rather than a settled purpose of enmity. It is supposed by many, that the language, as used by

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast an-

David, had primary reference to some violent outbreak of other nations against the Jews, and against himself as the head of that people. However this be, the application of it to the opposition which raged against our Lord, and his gospel, and his disciples, is manifest, and has apostolical authority. ¶ *And the people, &c.* We have here an instance of Hebrew parallelism, so called; where the second member of the sentence repeats the sentiment of the first, in different terms. The *people* are not to be regarded as distinct from the *heathen*, but as the same; and the *raging*, in the one case, answers to the *imagining of vain things*, in the other. ¶ *Vain things.* Or, empty things; that is, ineffectual. All opposition to God, whether tumultuous or with a more settled and deliberate purpose, is wholly vain and ineffectual. "None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Dan. iv. 35.

26. In this verse, is another Hebrew parallel; the same idea being expressed by the standing up of the *kings*, and the gathering together of the *rulers*; namely, the opposition manifested against the Messiah by them who exercised authority among men. This was true in regard to Jesus himself; for the rulers of the Jews steadfastly opposed him, both by turbulence and more systematic means, through his whole ministry, and finally prevailed on the Roman rulers to put him to death. The same opposition was manifest by the same class of men against the apostles and first Christians; and, for ages afterwards, the church was cruelly persecuted by the rulers of the nations. The reference in this place, however, is more immediately to the opposition and persecution then raging. ¶ *Against the Lord.* As Jesus came in his Father's name and to perform his will, John v. 43; vi. 38, 39; opposition against him was actually opposition against God. This principle was admitted to be true, even by the Jews; see Acts v. 38, 39. ¶ *His Christ.* Or, his anoint-

ointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

ed; for such is the meaning of the Hebrew Messiah and the Greek Christ. See note on Matt. i. 1.

27. *Of a truth.* Truly; actually. The predication had been verified. The opposition foretold had been manifested, and the prophecy fulfilled, in regard to Jesus; and he had thus been pointed out as the person intended by the Messiah, or the Christ. ¶ *Child.* Rather *Son*, as in Acts iii. 13, 26, or *servant*, as in ver. 25. The English *child* is generally applied to very young persons. But the word, here used, is not thus confined in its application. It indicates relationship, without special regard to age; just as we use the term children in the phrase "children of Israel," meaning the descendants of Israel, or "children of God," meaning those who are truly the servants of God, or who are led by his Spirit. ¶ *Whom thou hast anointed.* See note on Matt. i. 1. ¶ *Both Herod and Pontius Pilate.* The part taken by these governors, in the attempt to destroy our Lord, is related by Luke, xxiii. 1—12. ¶ *With the Gentiles.* The Romans, by whose instrumentality our Lord was crucified. ¶ *People of Israel.* Very many of the Jews regarded our Lord as a prophet, and were disposed to receive him as such. But they were either cajoled or terrified by the rulers and priests, inasmuch that, when Pilate would have released the prisoner in whom he declared he could "find no fault," there was a universal outcry of rulers and people, "Crucify him, crucify him." John xix. 4, 6, 15.

28. *For to do whatsoever, &c.* See note on Acts ii. 23. When our Lord foretold his own death, his disciples were sorrowful, and one of them openly remonstrated against such a termination of his ministry. Matt. xvi. 21, 22; John xvi. 5—7. And when he was crucified, they abandoned all hope of the establishment of his kingdom. Luke xxiv. 21, and note. But after his resurrection, he taught them, and succeeded in making them comprehend,



29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and won-

ders may be done by the name of thine holy child Jesus.

31 ¶ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy

that all his sufferings were according to the predictions concerning him; and that his enemies, acting under the influence of unholy passions, and intent only on the gratification of their malicious feelings, had in fact accomplished the plan marked out by divine providence. Luke xxiv. 45—48. Henceforward, they had no doubts or misgivings. Whatever other erroneous opinions they might entertain, they had no doubt that the death of Jesus was perfectly consistent with his character as the true Messiah. And when they saw him ascend up on high, they were ready to acknowledge, as they explicitly and most solemnly did in this prayer, that all the trials through which they had passed were no more than the divine "counsel determined before to be done." And this was one ground of their confidence in God. Believing that he had thus far controlled and guided the events connected with the establishment of a kingdom on the earth, they also believed he was able to carry on the work unto perfection, notwithstanding the opposition and threatenings of their powerful adversaries.

29. *Behold their threatenings.* "So look upon them, as to grant us deliverance."—*Barnes*. They desired that the glorious work which had commenced might not now be hindered by this new instance of opposition. ¶ *And grant, &c.* They did not ask to be discharged from the performance of their duty. They had once abandoned their Master, and fled. Mark xiv. 50. Such was not their intention now. They intended to be faithful even unto death; and they prayed that they might be sustained and supported in the full performance of their duty. ¶ *Boldness.* See note on ver. 13.

30. *By stretching forth, &c.* It is observable, that the apostles did not ask for assurance of honor, emolument, or even the preservation of their lives; personal considerations were out of the question; they sought only that the

cause of their Master might be advanced, for the benefit of mankind. See Acts xx. 22—24. They had observed the amazing effects produced by the exhibition of divine power, in the miracles already performed; and they besought God, in like manner, to continue "working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Mark xvi. 20. ¶ *Signs and wonders.* Miracles. So long as they had this testimony from God, they could not falter in declaring his word, nor doubt its efficacy in the conversion of sinners.

Not the slightest indication of selfishness can be perceived in this whole prayer; unless an ardent desire to perform one's duty faithfully and effectually be accounted selfishness. The single and earnest supplication was, that notwithstanding the violent opposition of the rulers against the gospel, it might be preached boldly and plainly, and be so confirmed by miracles that none could gainsay or resist; and that thus the number of believers might be increased, and their Master be honored.

31. *When they had prayed.* Immediately after they had ceased praying; so soon, that the event which followed was at once recognized as an indication of divine approval. ¶ *The place was shaken.* The phrase here used ordinarily denotes great agitation, as by an earthquake. Whether the *shaking* extended beyond the place in which the disciples were assembled, does not distinctly appear; nor is it material. It was designed to confirm the souls of this small band; to assure them that God owned them as his servants; and to remind them that the mighty power, to which they appealed, was still operative, and should be manifested on their behalf, according to their prayer. This object was sufficiently accomplished, if they felt and recognized the miraculous shaking, whether others noticed it or not. ¶ *They were all filled, &c.* "They were strengthened, and enabled with greater confidence and largeness of heart to speak. Mark here first the re-

Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that aught of the things

sult of impious counsel: the Jews consulted against the gospel, labored to suppress it by power, threatened and charged the apostles to speak no more in the name of Jesus; God gave them greater courage to preach it, and more excellent gifts than before: all opposition more propagateth truth. Secondly, here it appeareth, that the safest refuge in danger and the happiest issue of fear is, when it awakes us to a more fervent calling on the name of God; which, to the perplexed soul, is as the ark to the tired dove."—*Assembly's Annot.* ¶ *And they spake, &c.* From what follows, this seems to relate not so much to the *immediate* as to the *permanent* effect of the renewed outpouring of the Spirit.

32. *And the multitude, &c.* Considering the very few days which had elapsed since "the number of the names together were about a hundred and twenty," Acts i. 15, they who believed might now very properly be called a multitude. Three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost, and five thousand by the second sermon of Peter, in connection with the miracle which preceded it. Acts ii. 41; iv. 4. Or if, as some suppose, the number was increased to five thousand only, on the latter occasion, we still have an increase of more than forty fold, which would seem incredible, did we not know that the divine power was immediately exerted in producing the effect. ¶ *Of one heart and of one soul.* By this phrase, the most perfect union is denoted. These early disciples imbibed the spirit of their Master, and rendered obedience to that commandment which he enforced with such frequency and earnestness, by loving each other as they loved themselves. The fruits of this spirit of love are partly recounted in what follows. ¶ *Neither said any, &c.* They imparted liberally of their earthly goods to supply the wants of such as had need. This is not to be taken in a strictly literal sense; but only as importing that no believer

which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them *all*.

claimed his possessions for his own exclusive benefit. See note on Acts ii. 44.

33. *And with great power.* With energy and with efficacy. Such was the result of the effusion of the Spirit in answer to their prayer, ver. 31. They spake the word with freedom; and, in spite of all opposition, they testified the resurrection of their Lord, to the conversion of many souls. There is probably no distinct reference here to the miracles which they were enabled to perform. ¶ *Gave the apostles witness.* They testified. They proclaimed the fact, as one within their own knowledge. See Acts ii. 32. ¶ *Of the resurrection, &c.* This fact was proposed as the chief corner-stone of Christianity; and on this foundation it has firmly rested, and will for ever rest. If Jesus Christ rose from the dead, all that he taught is entitled to belief, and he was fully demonstrated to be the Son of God. Rom. i. 4. If he did not rise from the dead, his prediction was falsified, and no reliance could be placed on any thing taught or predicted by him. And they who abandon faith in his resurrection, whether conscious of it or not, in fact abandon all reasonable ground of faith in him as a divine teacher. To the establishment of this fact, therefore, the efforts of the apostles were first of all directed. And their success was commensurate with their efforts. As many as were convinced that the same Jesus who had been crucified was again alive, manifesting his power in his disciples, acknowledged him as the true Messiah, and united with the company of believers. ¶ *Great grace.* Or, *favor.* The same word is used here which is rendered *favor* in Luke ii. 52. It does not particularly refer to the condition of their hearts, which is sufficiently denoted elsewhere; but rather to the favor or kindness manifested towards them by their heavenly Father, or by their fellow-men. It is generally supposed, that the favor of men is specially intended. Their

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold.

35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was

made unto every man according as he had need.

36 And *Joses*, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

purity of life, union of feeling, mutual kindness and assistance to each other, faithfulness in the performance of duty, and ardent desire for the welfare even of their enemies, secured to the disciples the general favor of the community.

34. *Neither was*, &c. Because such general provision was made for all, *ver. 32.* ¶ *That lacked.* That was destitute of the necessities of life, or to whom sufficient assistance was not rendered. ¶ *For as many*, &c. Although this expression is general, yet it is manifestly to be taken with some limitation. See note on Acts ii. 44. The address of Peter to Ananias, Acts v. 4, distinctly indicates that disciples were not absolutely required, as a matter of duty, to sell all their possessions, or to put the whole price, if sold, into the common stock. In Acts x. 6, we find Peter residing in the house of "one Simon, a tanner;" but no intimation is given that the apostle rebuked his landlord for neglect of duty, in retaining the ownership of his house, while he freely entertained the faithful. "The sense doubtless is, that this was done *when it was necessary*; they parted with whatever property was needful to supply the wants of their poor brethren."—*Barnes*. So much was required for two reasons of special importance: (1.) That the wants of the poor might be effectually and cheerfully supplied; (2.) That the affection of the disciples might be withdrawn from earthly possessions; for they were liable to be plundered by their enemies, and the time was approaching when an abandonment of houses and lands would be absolutely necessary to the preservation of their lives.

35. *At the apostles' feet.* That is, they committed to the apostles, for the benefit of the poor, the amount received for the goods sold; and of the fund thus created, "distribution was made to every man according as he had need."

36. *And Joses.* If every disciple relinquished his whole property, it would be difficult to account for the selection of this one by name. But, on the contrary supposition, he may have been named as a remarkable instance of generosity, giving his whole substance. He may also have been specially named, because he was a foreigner by birth, and because he afterwards became an eminent minister of the word. ¶ *Surnamed Barnabas.* The giving of additional names, or surnames, was not unusual. Thus Jesus gave to Simon the surname of Peter, or a Rock, and to James and John the surname of Boanerges, or sons of thunder, with reference to certain peculiarities in their character. Matt. xvi. 18; Mark iii. 17. Joses probably received his surname, after he commenced his ministry, as descriptive of its character. The text does not fix the time when the name was given, except that it was given before this history was written.

¶ *Being interpreted.* The name given was Barnabas, in the language then spoken by the Jews. For the information of foreigners, the interpretation or explanation of it is given in Greek. ¶ *The son of consolation.* Or, as some prefer, The Son of prophecy, or of exhortation. The word here used has the same general import as that which is rendered Comforter in John xiv. 16; see the note. ¶ *A Levite.* Though the priests were not allowed to hold individual property, the same rule did not apply to others of the tribe of Levi. ¶ *Of the country of Cyprus.* This is "the largest island in the Mediterranean, situated between Cilicia and Syria. The island is extremely fertile, and abounded in wine, oil, honey, wool, copper, agate, and a beautiful species of rock-crystal.—Of the cities in the island, Paphos and Salamis are mentioned in the New Testament. The apostles Paul and Barnabas landed here A.D. 44. Acts xiii. 4.—Some time after, Barnabas went again into this

37 Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

## CHAPTER V.

**B**UT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

island with John, surnamed Mark, Acts xv. 39; and it is said he was martyred here, being stoned to death by the Jews of Salamis."—*Calmet*. If the tradition be true, Barnabas was one of the very few among the earliest preachers of the gospel, who died in his native province. However this be, he was instrumental in converting many to Christianity while he lived; and, what is even more important, he was himself "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Acts xi. 24.

37. See notes on ver. 32, 34, 35.

## CHAPTER V.

1. The same subject is continued, which was commenced in the preceding chapter. The division here is unfortunate. After having noticed the noble generosity of Barnabas, in devoting his whole property as well as himself to the cause of the infant church, the historian proceeds to notice another part of the same general transaction, of far different character. ¶ *Ananias*. Nothing is known of this person, except what is here recorded. ¶ *With Sapphira*. The wife may be named, merely because she was the partner of her husband's iniquity, or possibly because the land sold was her inheritance, and she joined in the sale. ¶ *Sold a possession*. The word here used does not distinctly indicate the kind of property sold; but, from ver. 3, it appears to have been land.

2. *Kept back*, &c. The original word, here used, is not found in the New Testament, except in this place, in ver. 3, and in Tit. ii. 10; in which last place it is rendered *purloining*. It means, to separate, to take a part from the whole; and it here doubtless conveys the idea of making such separation privily or surreptitiously. This, however, was not the great crime committed by Ananias and his wife. They had a perfect

2 And kept back *part* of the price, (his wife also being privy to *it*,) and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

right to reserve a part of the money. See ver. 4. ¶ *His wife also*, &c. It was a concerted plan between the guilty pair; hence they were equally criminal. ¶ *Laid it at the apostles' feet*. Committed it to the disposal of the apostles. See note on Acts iv. 35. It is not recorded that Ananias asserted this *part* to be the whole sum for which the land was sold. But so much is implied in the question, ver. 3, 4; else he would not have been justly chargeable with falsehood. At the least, we must suppose him to have given this part in such a manner, and under such circumstances, as naturally to convey the idea that it was the whole.

3. *But Peter said*, &c. The knowledge which Peter had concerning this guilty transaction seems to have been communicated to him supernaturally. The discovery of the falsehood and its punishment are very properly referred to a power higher than human. ¶ *Satan*. The form of speech was according to the customs of that age and people; but it is far from proving the existence of a personal evil spirit. See notes on Matt. iv. 1; xii. 26. Ananias was doubtless tempted like other men. See James i. 14. "To show that the wickedness was not from a foreign source, but from within, the apostle says, ver. 4, 'Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine own heart?' Covetousness was the Satan that prompted Ananias and Sapphira."—*Livermore*. ¶ *Filled thine heart*. "The filling of the heart, or the heart being filled, is a Hebrew phrase found in Esther vii. 5, and Eccles. viii. 11, according to the original; in both which places it signifies the daring to do a thing, and is so expressed by the LXX. in the first of those places, and by Aquila in the last of them."—*Pearce*. It indicates, in this place, not merely the temptation but the resolve to commit iniquity. ¶ *To lie to the Holy Ghost*. That is,

4 While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast

not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost. And great fear came on all them that heard these things.

to lie to us, the apostles, who are under the special influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord had given his disciples the general assurance, that any token of respect or contempt exhibited by others towards them should be regarded as offered to himself and to the Father. Luke x. 16. On this ground an attempt to deceive them was virtually an act of lying to the Holy Spirit, or to God, as expressed in ver. 4. But, in addition to this general assurance and its application, it must be remembered that the apostles had just been performing miracles, in which the Spirit and power of God were distinctly visible. To lie to them, therefore, was to lie to the Spirit which dwelt in them. ¶ *And to keep back, &c.* That is, to keep back a part, while professing to give the whole. See notes on ver. 2, 4.

4. *While it remained.* That is, before the land was sold; while it remained in its former condition, as a possession. ¶ *Was it not thine own?* This is a plain intimation that the disciples were not *required* to surrender their whole property to the common stock. It was a voluntary act on their part, — an act prompted by that spirit of universal love and brotherhood which characterized the faith which they professed. ¶ *After it was sold, &c.* This question implies that Ananias was not *required* to commit all his property to the apostles, even after he had converted it into money. It was still “in his own power.” If a spirit of genuine discipleship prompted him to bestow the whole in alms, he was at liberty so to do. He was equally at liberty to retain the whole, or a part, if he felt so disposed. But he was *not* at liberty to lie to the apostles and to the Spirit which was manifested in them, by professing or pretending to give the whole, while he privily retained a part. This was his crime; and for this he was punished. ¶ *Conceived this thing in thine heart.* What was represented in figurative language as a temptation of Satan, ver. 3, is here in plain language described as an act of his own corrupt passions.

The saying of James, i. 14, 15, is here strikingly verified. ¶ *Thou hast not lied, &c.* A Hebrew idiom, importing, thou hast lied rather to God than to men; or, thou hast lied not so much to men as to God. See notes on Matt. ix. 13; John vi. 38. Ananias had indeed lied to men; but the crime of lying to God was so much more aggravated, that the offence to men was scarcely worthy to be named.

5. *Hearing these words.* Thus perceiving that his wickedness was detected, and being caused most vividly to realize the enormity of his crime. ¶ *Fell down.* More literally, having fallen down. ¶ *Gave up the ghost.* Rather, expired. His death was sudden, and was more manifestly a penalty of his transgression, than if it had been occasioned by a lingering remorse. While the death of Ananias must be regarded as the act of God, designed to rebuke sin, and to intimidate evil doers, it may be supposed to have been produced by natural means. “The sin was one of great aggravation. It was suddenly and unexpectedly detected. The fact that it was known, the solemn charge that he had lied to God, struck him with horror. His conscience would reprove him for the enormity of his crime, and overwhelm him at the memory of his act of wickedness. These circumstances may be sufficient to account for this remarkable event.” — *Barnes.* The death of Judas was of similar character. He, in like manner, was overwhelmed with remorse; and, being choked by the violence of his emotions, fell headlong and died. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 5; Acts i. 18. ¶ *Great fear came, &c.* This manifest token of divine judgment, the visible appearance of the hand of God, so to speak, would naturally impress the witnesses with awe. They could not doubt that there is a God that judgeth in the earth; and they might well feel that they were standing before his tribunal. Such was one of the effects obviously designed to be produced by this *v. situation* of retribution.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

6. *The young men, &c.* Some have supposed these young men were a class of persons specially appointed for the performance of certain duties in the church; but this seems improbable, when it is considered that the church was yet in an unorganized state. The more probable opinion is, that the younger portion of the company removed and buried Ananias, simply because they were the more active and athletic. ¶ *And buried him.* This sudden burial will not seem singular, when we consider that "the Jews imitated the example of the Persians, and buried the body very soon after death. A box or coffin for the dead was not used, except in Babylon and Egypt. The corpse was wrapped in folds of linen, and placed upon a bier, and was then carried by four or six persons to the tomb."—*Jahn*. In the case of sudden death, when it would be more difficult to preserve the body in that warm climate, the burial would take place even sooner after death than under ordinary circumstances.

7. *Three hours.* As the places of burial were without the walls of the city, as much as three hours would naturally be consumed, in *winding up* the body of Ananias, perhaps in his own flowing garments, and bearing it to the grave. It has been suggested that this interval of three hours was the space between two stated hours of prayer, of which the Jews had three, namely, the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day; or at nine o'clock, noon, and three o'clock. If the events here recorded occurred at the temple, such would be the most natural interpretation; but there is nothing in the text to indicate the place. ¶ *His wife.* As Sapphira was a party to the falsehood, and attempted deception, she was justly made to partake in the punishment. ¶ *Not knowing, &c.* She had not heard of her husband's death; otherwise she would not have ventured to brave a similar fate, by reiterating

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the

the falsehood and reënacting the hypocrisy. "It may seem strange, that during the three hours which had elapsed, tidings of her husband's death should not have reached her, especially as the event occurred in a city. But the horror with which those were struck who witnessed the scene and who heard of it, and their suspicions, at least, that she was involved in the same guilt as her husband, and their consequent desire not to see her,—to say nothing of the want of time before and after his burial, ver. 9, or of a variety of personal and domestic affairs that would require to be attended to before the next hour of worship,—may account for the fact that no one conveyed intelligence to her."—*Ripley*.

8. *Peter answered.* Rather, *addressed.* ¶ *For so much.* That is, for the sum which Ananias had previously represented as the full amount received. ¶ *Yea, for so much.* In one sense, this was true; for they did receive so much, and more. Yet her declaration was equivalent to an absolute falsehood; because she evidently intended to be understood, that the land was sold for *only* so much.. The criminality of lying consists in the intention to deceive; and this may be accomplished as effectually, by stating a part of the truth and concealing the remainder, as by downright and unmitigated falsehood. In this case, the proper import of the question was, whether the sum named were the full price received for the land; and the answer was an unqualified affirmative, and therefore false and deceptive.

9. *Ye have agreed, &c.* They had formed a deliberate purpose or conspiracy to utter the same falsehood, the more effectually to deceive the apostles. And this fact was communicated to Peter by the same Spirit which revealed the guilt of Ananias. See note on ver. 3. ¶ *To tempt.* To tempt literally means *to try, to put to the test.* Hence temptation to sin is the putting

Lord? behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came

in, and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

of one's moral power to the test, or a trial of his ability to resist evil influences. In this case, it rather denotes the trial of divine wisdom and justice, — wisdom to detect hidden iniquity, and justice to punish it. We are not to suppose that such was the *design* of these guilty persons: *that* was to retain a part of their property while they professed to bestow the whole, and thus to become entitled to the credit and advantage of more generosity than they practised. But, in the execution of their design, they behaved precisely as though they believed that God either could not detect their hypocrisy and falsehood, or would not punish them, if detected. They, therefore, virtually tempted, tried, or put to the test, the divine wisdom and justice. ¶ *The Spirit of the Lord.* Equivalent to "the Holy Ghost," ver. 3, and "God," ver. 4. ¶ *The feet of them.* That is, the persons. This is a common Hebrew idiom. Ps. cxxii. 2; Isa. lii. 7; Nahum i. 15. ¶ *At the door.* Near at hand. Matt. xxiv. 33; Mark xiii. 29. The young men had not returned from the burial of Ananias; but they were very near. ¶ *And shall carry thee out.* The apostle did not invoke the judgment of God on the head of Sapphira; but he foresaw and predicted it. There is no evidence that the death of either Ananias or his wife was *caused* by Peter. His only connection with the event was to foretell it. The judgment was wrought by the direct exercise of divine power, without the intervention of any human agent. It was manifestly so understood by the Jews; else why did they not allege this against Peter and his brethren, as a grave crime? They had persecuted Jesus for relieving human pains and diseases, and for restoring life to the dead. They had persecuted his disciples for performing a miracle of like character. Is it for one moment to be believed, that they would suffer a miracle, attended with such apparent severity, to pass without rebuke, if they had believed, or supposed they could make the people believe,

that the apostles were active instruments in its performance? Could they have desired a more favorable opportunity to arouse the people to the highest pitch of indignation, than would be afforded by what they might represent as the murder of Ananias and his wife, if by any possibility their death could have been traced to any act of the apostles, as its cause? The silence of the priests and rulers on this subject affords satisfactory proof, that they did not suppose the apostles to have been in any degree responsible for the event; but that they regarded it as an act of God, and, like the mass of the people, were for the time awed and filled with fear.

10. *Then fell she down, &c.* Hearing the fate which had befallen her husband, she became a partaker of the emotions which overwhelmed him. Together they sinned; and together they died and were buried.

11. *Great fear, &c.* See note on ver. 5. The events recorded in the preceding verses were of such a strikingly solemn character, as deeply to impress the minds of believers, or the church, with a sense of the divine presence and power; and the same sensation of awe pervaded the minds of all witnesses, whether believers or not. They had witnessed sudden death treading closely on the heels of an attempt to deceive the apostles by falsehood; and as the same result was witnessed in two distinct cases, in rapid succession, no doubt could remain that the offence and the judgment had a near relation to each other. Believing, as they did, that it was the judgment of God, they could not doubt that the apostles, for some reason, were under his special protection. The result which might be expected, actually followed. No further attempts were made to impose on the apostles; and many were induced to acknowledge their authority as messengers of God, and to listen to their words for instruction, ver. 14.

This marvellous instance of divine interposition bears a striking resem-

12 ¶ And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and won

blance to one which was manifested at the establishment of the Mosaic dispensation. The order of the priesthood, and the manner of offering various sacrifices to the Lord, having been established, Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron the high priest, "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." Lev. x. 1, 2. To this may be added another of similar character. Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and others, openly rebelled against Moses, and denied that God had given him authority to govern Israel. In the presence of the whole congregation, Moses appealed to the Lord to manifest, by some sign, whether or not his authority should be obeyed. And immediately the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up Korah and his company, and they perished from among the congregation; and some hundreds of their abettors perished by fire. Numb. ch. xvi. Thus did God set his seal to the former dispensation by the destruction of blasphemous opposers; and thus also did he seal the authority of those who were appointed ministers of the new and better covenant. It is idle to deny, as some have done, the justice of this judgment of God. "Acts of judgment sometimes occur as sudden and decided, in the providence of God, as in this case. The profane man, the drunkard, the profligate, is sometimes as suddenly stricken down, as in this instance. Cases have not been uncommon, where the blasphemer has been smitten in death with the curse on his lips; and God often thus comes forth in judgment, to slay the wicked, and to show that there is a God that reigns in the earth. This narrative cannot be objected to, as improbable, until all such cases are disposed of; nor can this infliction be regarded as unjust, until all the instances where men die by remorse of conscience, or by the direct judgment of heaven, are *proved* to be unjust also."—*Barnes*. It may not be out of place to remark, that sudden death, of itself, is not to be regarded as a penalty of transgression. We sometimes know it to be the result of virtuous endeavor; as when a man attempts to save the life of another, in peril by fire or water, and perishes in

the attempt. Sometimes we know it to be occasioned by the ordinary operation of natural causes, having no perceivable connection with human guilt; as when, by the violence of the wind, a noble vessel is driven upon the rocks and wrecked, or enveloped in flames kindled by lightning or otherwise; and the good and the bad, the sincere worshipper of God and the thoughtless and profane, are overwhelmed in a common destruction. We can only regard sudden death as a penalty of transgression, when we can distinctly trace a connection between the one and the other; as when a man voluntarily drinks deadly poison and falls dead; or when he drinks that slower but not much less fatal poison, which intoxicates the brain, and leaves the body a helpless mass, to be crushed by the heavy wheels of a carriage, or to be frozen to ice by the cold of winter; or when, as in the text, the result was predicted by a servant of God, speaking under the direction of his Spirit; or when, as in the case already referred to, another servant of the Lord made a solemn appeal to God, to judge between him and his opposers. Numb. xvi. 28—35.

12. What follows, ver. 12—16, has reference to the events of several days, succeeding the death of Ananias and his wife; events which naturally resulted from the amazing display of divine power recorded in the preceding verses. ¶ *By the hands, &c.* That is, by the apostles, or through their instrumentality. ¶ *Signs and wonders.* Miracles. See notes on Acts ii. 22. The particular kind of miracles is not specified; but they were evidently such as to confirm the faith of the people in the apostles as accredited messengers of God. See ver. 14. ¶ *One accord.* With a union of desire and purpose. See note on Acts i. 14. *Solomon's porch.* See notes on John x. 23, Acts iii. 11. Although our Lord came to abrogate the old dispensation and establish the new, and to introduce a more pure and acceptable form of worship, yet he did not refuse to unite with the Jews in their customary prayers and temple-service. See Matt. xii. 9. In like manner the apostles and early disciples appear to have been constant in their attendance at the temple, at the regular hours of prayer. As was



ders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

very natural, they associated together in one company. The place to which they usually resorted was a court styled Solomon's porch; and here they not only offered to God their prayers and thanksgivings, but taught the people in his name, and by his power wrought miracles.

13. *Of the rest, &c.* Various interpretations of this place have been given, and its true meaning is confessedly obscure. Some suppose the other disciples dared not associate familiarly with the apostles, in whom the mighty power of God was so remarkably manifested. "No one of those who were converts mixed himself with the apostles, when they were walking in Solomon's portico."—*Pearce*. Others, with perhaps more probability, suppose that no others of that class whom Ananias represented,—those hypocrites, namely, who desired to obtain the benefits of perfect discipleship without submitting to its requisitions,—dared to imitate his attempt to gain admission to the fellowship of the faithful. "They were so terrified with this example against hypocrites, that they who were not sincere durst not now make false shows of religion, condemn the apostles, or encounter them by argument."—*Assemb. Annot.* This opinion is substantially adopted by modern commentators. ¶ *The people magnified them.* Honored them; respected them; regarded them with favor and admiration. There seems to have been no suspicion among the people, that the fate of Ananias and Sapphira detracted from the reputation of the apostles, as men of true piety, or as peaceable, well-disposed members of community. On the contrary, this event was regarded as a divine attestation to the genuineness of the apostolical ministry, and a proof that God actually dwelt with his servants, and made bare his arm in their behalf.

14. *And believers, &c.* This was the natural result of the state of things before described. "This is not inconsis-

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women;)

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that

ent with the first clause of ver. 13; for though the base and unspiritual were overawed and kept back by the recent dispensation, yet all true hearts were by this very cause more drawn to the pure and heaven-watched church."—*Livermore*. ¶ *Women*. It is known that certain women were among the most firm, undaunted, and faithful disciples of our Lord, during his earthly ministry. They forsook him not, in the utmost extremity, but wept around his cross, and mourned over his tomb. But this is the first distinct notice of any females who were converted under the ministry of the apostles. They were not the last, however, nor the least valuable fruits of the gospel ministry. In the subsequent history of the apostles, and in their epistles, we find abundant testimony to the faith, zeal, constancy, and Christian conduct of those females who embraced the gospel and united with the Christian church.

15. This verse should be read in connection with ver. 12, from which it is separated by a parenthetical sentence. What follows here is represented as the result of the signs and wonders wrought by the apostles among the people. ¶ *Insomuch*. So that; in consequence of which. ¶ *Brought forth the sick, &c.* By so doing, they manifested their faith in the miraculous power of the apostles to heal the sick, as they already had healed the lame man, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. ¶ *Beds and couches*. It has been said, that of the original words here used, the former denotes the kind of bed used by the rich, and the latter, the more coarse and hard kind used by the poor. Such may be the true meaning of the words; yet it is certain that different evangelists apply both these words to the same bed or couch. For example, what Matthew, ix. 2, 6, and Luke, v. 18, call *klinē* (κλίνη), is called *krabbatos* (κράββατος) by Mark, ii. 4, 9, 11, 12; and the latter word is used apparently to indicate the same kind of bed

at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with un-

by John, v. 8—12. Still the two words may indicate different qualities in beds; and it has been supposed, that, by the use of both words, the historian designed to convey the idea that all classes of sick men, both rich and poor, were brought forth to be healed. ¶ *The shadow of Peter*, &c. By so placing the sick that the shadow of Peter might fall upon them, as he passed by, the people manifested the strength of their faith, even as did the woman who pressed through the crowd that she might touch the hem of our Saviour's garment. Matt. ix. 20, 21. Yet there is no evidence that they were required or encouraged by the disciples to do this, or that any were thus healed. In the succeeding verse, individuals are expressly said to have been healed; but not so here. The fact that the people exercised strong faith is mentioned, and their conduct is alleged in proof; but the result is left to conjecture. That Peter should have been peculiarly regarded by the people may be easily accounted for, by the consideration that, up to this time, he had been the principal speaker among the apostles, and the most active human agent in the miracles already performed.

16. *There came also*, &c. The persons before mentioned were residents in Jerusalem. But, as in the days of the Saviour, the news concerning the miracles had gone abroad, and multitudes from other cities in that vicinity repaired to Jerusalem, with their sick, that they might share in the blessing miraculously dispensed. ¶ *Vexed with unclean spirits*. See note on Mark v. 1—20. ¶ *Healed every one*. It is distinctly declared that all these were healed; and it is implied that, though the healing was the work of God, it was communicated by the ministry of the apostles. Thus was their authority confirmed, and the people induced to give more earnest heed to their instructions.

clean spirits; and they were healed every one.

17 ¶ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

17. *High priest*. Probably Caiaphas, who held that office at the mock trial of our Lord. See John xviii. 13, 14. Having already so deeply committed himself, it was natural that he should be exceedingly desirous utterly to crush this new sect and their heresy. He had assisted in procuring the death of its Founder; but he was soon filled with dismay by the intelligence that twelve others had risen up, and were boldly preaching the resurrection of the victim, and performing miracles in his name; see ver. 28. Having arrested and examined them, he had caused them to be commanded to cease from their ministry. Acts iv. 18. They had not regarded this commandment, but continued to preach as before, and to perform miracles even more abundantly. No wonder he was indignant; for, in all ages, when a wicked man is bent on iniquity, he is more exasperated by failure, than a good man by the disappointment of his desires. And it may be here remarked, that, when a man takes the first step in sin, he cannot foresee what shall be the second. The first step of the high priest was the destruction of a single life. The second, if he would carry out his original purpose, involved the destruction of many lives. And, although he might have recoiled, had he foreseen the result from the beginning, yet when the hour came, he was ready to act. See ver. 33. Let us beware of the first step in iniquity, lest it should conduct to ruin. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," is the only perfectly safe rule. ¶ *All they that were with him*. That is, they who agreed with him in opinion, as is manifest from what follows. ¶ *Sadducees*. See note on Matt. iii. 7. Many of this sect had obtained seats in the Sanhedrim, the highest ecclesiastical council among the Jews, in the apostolic age. See Acts xxiii. 1—6. There was a peculiar reason why this sect should be so excited. One of their distinguishing characteristics was a

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison-doors,

disbelief in a future state of existence, and the resurrection from the dead. The apostles preached, as the very foundation of their doctrine, the resurrection of Jesus, and his present existence, though he had once been dead and buried; and multitudes believed their testimony. As many as thus believed renounced of course the opinion of the Sadducees on that point, if they ever entertained it. This sect, therefore, was in danger of being diminished in number, and overpowered by their detested rivals, the Pharisees, if not by the new sect, so recently established, which, though thoroughly despised, was beginning to be regarded with fear. ¶ *Filled with indignation.* The common translation conveys the true idea; though the word rendered *indignation* is the same which is elsewhere translated *zeal*, and of itself indicates a fervid or burning emotion, either good or bad. In this case, it is doubtless used in its bad sense; for, though the high priest and his associates had a *zeal* for their own faith, which was so energetically assailed, it was overpowered by their anger and indignation against the assailants, who neither spared the doctrine nor heeded the threatenings of its professors.

18. *Laid their hands on the apostles.* Arrested them. This phraseology is yet in frequent use. ¶ *The common prison.* Or the public prison,—the receptacle of criminals and malefactors of all sorts. This was probably in the latter part of the day; and the high priest caused them to be imprisoned, that they might be forthcoming when the council should assemble in the morning. It was only on very extraordinary occasions that this council held a session in the night. See note on Matt. xxvi. 57.

19. *The angel of the Lord.* As the article does not occur in the Greek, a more correct translation would be “an angel of the Lord.” The word *angel* signifies simply a *messenger*, without denoting his nature, whether human or superhuman. That fact must be determined by other circumstances. In

and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

the present case, there is no reasonable ground for doubt, that the angel was a heavenly messenger, and that the whole transaction was miraculous. No perceivable good could be accomplished by a deliverance from prison by human means, followed by such immediate recapture, ver. 26. But from a miraculous deliverance, two beneficial results are easily perceived: (1.) The apostles themselves would be inspired with renewed confidence that they were under the divine guidance and protection; and (2.) the people would be still more impressed with a belief that such men were entitled to the most implicit confidence and veneration. ¶ *Opened the prison-doors, &c.* It does not appear that the keeper of the prison was aroused, as in Acts xvi. 27; but the deliverance, though silent, was effectual, and the apostles were led forth and restored to liberty. The miracle is the more apparent from the fact that the guards, who were stationed to watch the prison, and who were found at their post in the morning, ver. 23, were wholly unconscious of the transaction. The doors were as securely shut as before; and it is not to be supposed that a Roman guard had slept, or been negligent in their prescribed duty. See note on Matt. xxviii. 13.

20. *Go, stand and speak.* They were assured that their deliverance was not designed to aid them in abandoning their ministry, or in shrinking from the trials involved in a faithful performance of their duty. On the contrary, they were to return immediately to their former labor, and testify the grace of God openly. Thus would the miracle become more manifest, and a deeper impression be made on the minds of the people. ¶ *In the temple.* They were not even to retire to private places, to avoid the persecuting rage of their adversaries; but in the temple, the most public place in Jerusalem, where they could not by any possibility be overlooked by their enemies, they were to lift up the voice as before. ¶ *Words of this life.* Or, the gospel, which is not unfrequently indicated by

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came,

and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 Now when the high priest, and the captain of the temple, and

a similar form of speech. See John vi. 68. The great doctrine brought to light in the gospel is an immortal, a holy and happy existence beyond the grave. 1 Cor. ch. xv.; 2 Tim. i. 10. The words of life, therefore, were the gospel. Some have interpreted the phrase as referring specially to the renewed life of Jesus Christ, as this was the great fact so earnestly and constantly asserted by the apostles, as the foundation-stone on which the doctrine of Christianity rested. They understand, therefore, that the apostles were here commanded to persist in the public declaration that God had restored to life and glory the same Jesus whom the Jews had slain in the most ignominious manner. But the other interpretation, more general in its character, seems preferable. It embraces the particular point referred to, but includes also all the other words pertaining to life, or the whole of Christianity.

21. *When they heard.* Or, having heard. *They entered into the temple.* The structure of the sentence indicates that they went directly from the prison to the temple. If such be the fact, they were delivered just as the morning was beginning to appear. ¶ *Early in the morning.* The word here used occurs in only two other places in the New Testament, Luke xxiv. 1; John viii. 2; in both which cases it is translated as here. It indicates what is often called "break of day;" the period when light begins to appear, but before it dispels the shades of darkness. Thus, what is called "very early in the morning," Luke xxiv. 1, is defined to be "early, when it was yet dark," John xx. 1. At this early hour they repaired to the temple, that they might instruct the people as soon as they should begin to assemble; and they were found actively engaged in the performance of this duty, when the officers sought for them, ver. 25, 26.

¶ *The high priest — called the council, &c.* Determined to accomplish his purpose effectually, the high priest summoned the Sanhedrim, that, under the form of a trial, the disciples might be silenced by death or otherwise. ¶ *The senate.* Or, the eldership. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It denotes men of ripe years; and it was used as the title of the council or senate, as in former times that body was generally composed of such men. The persons here described were probably not members of the Sanhedrim, or supreme council; but, on account of their age and influence, were called in upon this emergency, to aid by their advice, and give countenance to the violent proceedings which were contemplated. ¶ *To have them brought.* They were not aware that the prisoners were at liberty,—that God had delivered them as birds from the snare.

22. *Found them not.* It was now for the first time discovered by the public authorities, that the disciples had left the prison. Their deliverance had been effected in such a manner as not to disturb even the Roman guard; and no visible trace remained, that the door had been opened.

23. *Found we shut, &c.* The condition in which the prison was found was such as to forbid the suspicion that the prisoners had been released by human means. Their escape was inexplicable.

24. *Captain of the temple.* See note on Acts iv. 1. *Doubted of them.* They were perplexed. They could not account for the events which had occurred, nor foresee the results which might follow. ¶ *Whereunto this would grow.* All their efforts hitherto had been unavailing. They had crucified one; and twelve had arisen in his place, testifying the same unwelcome truths, and converting thousands by their testimo-

the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the

people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did we not straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your

ny. They had commanded them to be silent, and they disobeyed. They had placed them in prison, to be kept for trial, and they were gone; but how, or whither, they knew not. And what would be the issue of this controversy between themselves, in possession of human power, and the persecuted disciples who professed to be aided by divine power, they were unable to discover. Hence they were perplexed, like men who had lost their way, and knew not whither to direct their steps.

25. *Told them, &c.* To add to their perplexity, they were informed that these men, whom they designed to terrify or crush, were even then teaching in the temple, in utter defiance of their threats, unmoved by what they had witnessed and suffered, and apparently fearless and unconcerned as to the future.

26. *Without violence.* Not by force. They did not lead them through the streets *bound*, as was their custom, Matt. xxvii. 2, but suffered them to go as if voluntarily. ¶ *They feared, &c.* It may be that their perplexity caused them to avoid violence, lest they should suffer harm from any injustice to men who *might* be under the divine protection. But, fearing men more than God, the chief reason of their forbearance is said to have been an apprehension of a popular uproar. They knew that multitudes regarded the apostles with reverence and affection; and they feared that any public indignity would cause them to take up stones, and avenge the outrage in a summary manner.

27. *Brought them.* Though no force was employed, the apostles followed the officers to the place of trial; partly because they were willing to yield obedience to the constituted authorities, so far as they could do so without violating their duty to a higher authority; and partly, perhaps, because they felt

assured that another opportunity would thus be afforded them to proclaim the truth in the unwilling ears of their oppressors.

28. *Straitly command, &c.* Literally, command with a command; a common Hebraism, giving intensity to an expression. The charge of the high priest was, that the apostles had disobeyed a positive command of the Sanhedrin, which was regarded by the Jews as a high crime; and perhaps the only proper and effectual answer they could have given was that which they did give, ver. 29. ¶ *In this name.* That is, in the name of Jesus; for in his name only did they preach, and perform miracles. The priests avoided mentioning the name, here and in the remainder of their remarks; but the meaning cannot be mistaken. ¶ *Filled Jerusalem, &c.* This charge was true; but, though designed to prove the criminality of the apostles, it actually furnishes proof of their activity, energy, and zeal in their Master's cause. They had truly proclaimed the gospel to the inhabitants; thousands had been converted, and doubtless communicated the tidings to other thousands. ¶ *Intend to bring this man's blood upon us.* That is, ye endeavor to make us responsible for his death. The Jews had used a similar form of expression, at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus: "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matt. xxvii. 25. Perhaps the rulers began to apprehend that the imprecation might yet be verified. It may be observed that the apostles, when addressing the people, had not represented the rulers as more responsible than others for the death of Jesus, though they might have done so with truth. Acts ii. 23—24, 36; iii. 12—18. It was no part of their design to excite the people to deeds of violence, or rebellion against the constituted authorities of

doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 ¶ Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised

the nation. But when addressing the rulers themselves, the apostles did not hesitate to remind them of their individual responsibility. Acts iv. 10. When their faithful testimony to the truth, in regard to their Master's death at the hands of wicked men, was alleged against them as a crime, they did not, by denial or equivocation, attempt to evade the charge; but, without saying that they had or had not attempted to bring the blood of Jesus on the rulers, they distinctly declared the fact, in language not capable of being misunderstood, ver. 30. They put their defence on the ground, not of denial, but of justification.

29. *Peter and the other apostles, &c.* Probably only one was the speaker, while the others signified their assent. ¶ *Obeŷ God rather than men.* See note on Acts iv. 19, 20. This was their justification. The rulers had required them to be silent; but God had commanded them to speak; and they held themselves bound to obey the higher authority. While they knew that God had raised and exalted the same Jesus whom the Jews crucified, and felt the operation of his Spirit within them, assisting their testimony by miraculous signs, they avowed their determination to proclaim the truth, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear; and to commit the result to that God whose commands they religiously obeyed.

30. *The God of our fathers.* They did not attempt to set up a new God. They worshipped the same God whom the patriarchs revered and obeyed, and whose authority was acknowledged by the council. ¶ *Raised up Jesus.* Restored life to him; raised him from the dead. This was a fact of the utmost importance, and was accordingly urged with earnestness by the apostles on all occasions. Livermore suggests that the reference is rather "to his being originally set apart for this work, honored with a divine commission." But the other interpretation

up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree:

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

seems more natural and correct. It would have been impossible to convince the Jews that he whom they had crucified as a malefactor was truly exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, unless they were first convinced that he had been raised from the dead. 1 Cor. xv. 14. The rulers knew that Jesus had once been dead. They were assured that he was again alive; and the assurance was given by witnesses who had personal knowledge of the fact. This was the first and an indispensable step towards convincing them of their enormous wickedness. ¶ *Slew and hanged on a tree.* "Or, whom ye slew, having hanged on a tree; that is, whom ye crucified, and by that means caused to die."—*Pearce*. Few instances are recorded of more calm unshaken moral courage, than was here displayed by the apostles. Placed before a tribunal from whose power they had no earthly means of escape, a tribunal incensed against them for representing the judges to be guilty of the blood of Jesus, they allege distinctly, *Ye crucified and slew him*. If this renders you guilty of his blood, so be it. We know the fact, and the Spirit of God witnesses with us that ye did it. We are his witnesses. God has commanded us to speak. We must obey him, be the consequences what they may.

31. *Him hath God exalted.* See note on Acts ii. 33. The same Jesus whom they had mocked and spurned was exalted by the Father to be their ruler and the dispenser of blessings. ¶ *Prince.* See note on Acts iii. 15. The word here implies the exercise of power and authority. It was a title allowed by the Jews to belong to the Messiah; and the attributes ascribed to him were also familiar to their minds, though their true nature was not accurately apprehended. So that the language of Peter is equivalent to the more plain declaration, *The same Jesus whom you have crucified is the true Messiah.* ¶ *Saviour.* See note on Matt. i. 21. ¶ *Repentance.* See note on Matt. iii. 2.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things: and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

"The word *repentance* here is equivalent to *reformation*, and a change of life. The expression here does not differ from what is said in Acts iii. 26."—*Barnes*. ¶ *To Israel*. The mission of Jesus was not confined to the Jews. He was sent also as a light to the Gentiles, that he might become salvation unto the end of the earth. Isaiah xlix. 6. Hence he commanded his disciples to go into "all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15. But the children of Israel are here specially named, because Peter was addressing them, and desired to make them feel that they were individually interested; and because, while it was true that God had promised to bless all the kindreds of the earth in his Son Jesus, it was also true that this Saviour was sent *first* to the Jews, to bless them by turning them away from their iniquities. Acts iii. 25, 26. ¶ *Forgiveness of sins*. See notes on Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15; xxvi. 28. "By *giving* repentance is here understood the publication of those great facts and truths which would awaken penitence; which would lead even Israel, though stained with the blood of her Messiah, to turn from the evil of her way, and embrace the Christian faith."—*Livermore*. "He is said to be exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, by giving the knowledge of that remission of sins which is promised to the penitent, and of those motives which should induce them to repent. So God gave unto the Gentiles repentance unto life, when he sent Peter to them, to preach that word, by which they repenting should be saved, Acts xi. 14, 18."—*Whitby*. This interpretation is true, as far as it goes. But to express the full idea contained in the text, I apprehend, should be added the influence exerted by our Lord, through the Spirit, upon the hearts of men. He was made a prince or king, and received power over all flesh, for the express purpose of enabling him to subdue the enmity of their hearts, that they might turn from their sins, worship God, obey the Son, and become partakers of eternal life; and he will reign until this object shall be fully accom-

33 ¶ When they heard *that*, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

34 Then stood there up one in

plished. John xvii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 24—28; Phil. ii. 9—11. The power of the gospel, in reforming men and preparing them for the forgiveness of sins, is confessedly great; yet it seems improper to limit to this alone the influence exerted by our Lord for the benefit of mankind. Else, how shall they be forgiven and saved who never heard the gospel? or what advantage can result from the exaltation of Jesus to the throne of power, *after* he had proclaimed the gospel among men? He will not reign in vain. Not only through the influence of the gospel, but by other means within his control, he will convert enemies into friends, and turn men from the slavery of sin to the free service of God, until the last enemy shall be subdued, and the universe be filled with joy.

32. *We are his witnesses*, &c. The death of Jesus, his restoration to life, and his ascension on high, were facts within their own knowledge. So much rested not alone on faith; for they had the testimony of their own senses; they had seen, and heard, and handled their Master after his resurrection, had stood by him when he was taken up from the earth, and watched until he ascended beyond the reach of their vision. The remainder was rather a matter of faith. Yet even of this they might with all propriety claim to be witnesses. They had heard the testimony of their Master; and the truth of that testimony was confirmed beyond the possibility of doubt, by his resurrection from the dead. Moreover, they knew themselves to be able to perform miracles in his name; and they felt within them the operation and strength of that Spirit which he had promised to communicate. They had a right, therefore, to claim credit as competent witnesses of the fact. ¶ *So also is the Holy Ghost*. The manifestation of the divine presence, favor, and power, in the miracles performed by them, confirmed their testimony, and gave witness to the same facts. See Mark xvi. 20.

33. *They were cut*, &c. The word here used signifies *to saw*, or to cut with a saw. It is not elsewhere used in the

the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people,

and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men

New Testament, except in Acts vii. 54. "As applied to the mind, it means to be agitated with rage and indignation, as if wrath should seize upon the mind as a saw does upon wood, and tear it violently, or agitate it severely."—*Barnes*. In Acts ii. 37, another word is used, and a far different emotion indicated. There, compunction of conscience, alarm, and sorrow, followed the preaching of the word. Here, a more stubborn class was addressed, and with a different result. They were indignant and enraged, because the apostles disobeyed their commands, disregarded their threats, and even reiterated the charge that they were guilty of shedding innocent blood and crucifying their own Messiah. They were now fully aroused, and determined on vengeance. ¶ *Took counsel to slay them*. See note on Matt. xii. 14. They had already slain one, without effect. They now determined to slay all these witnesses at once, and thus relieve themselves of their disagreeable testimony. Thus readily do the wicked proceed from sin to sin.

34. *Gamaliel*. "This was Paul's tutor, Acts xxii. 3, the son of that Simeon that took Christ into his arms, Luke ii. 28, and the grandchild of the famous Hillel. He is called 'Gamaliel the elder;' for there were two others of the same name, one his grandchild, the other his great-grandchild in the fifth descent. And he is always called 'Rabban' Gamaliel; and so likewise were those two, his grandchildren, entitled; these being three of the seven that only carried this title, Rabban; a title which was of the highest eminency and note of any title among their doctors; and that very title showeth the great reputation he had among the people. He is held to have died eighteen years before the destruction of the city, or about twenty-two years after this. And Onkelos, the Targumist of the Law, is reported to have burnt three score and ten pounds of frankincense for him, being dead; and by this it is more than a conjecture, that he died, not a Christian, but lived and died in his Pharisaical opinions and profession."—*Lightfoot*. ¶ *Doctor of the law*.

See note on Luke ii. 46. He was learned in the ecclesiastical law, as we should say now; but at that period, the Mosaic code embraced both the ecclesiastical and civil law; and the study and exposition thereof was not the labor of two distinct professions. ¶ *Had in reputation, &c.* Highly respected for his wisdom and learning. These circumstances account for the general attention which was given to his advice by the council, which consisted of two contending parties, extremely jealous of each other. So much confidence was reposed in him by the people, that it would have been hazardous for either party to adopt very violent measures contrary to his advice. ¶ *Put the apostles forth*. That is, from the council chamber. It is not usual for judges or juries to hold consultations in the hearing of prisoners. ¶ *A little space*. A short time, while they might deliberate.

35. *Take heed, &c.* This address of Gamaliel has often been quoted as a proof of his liberality and religious tolerance, and a noble example for imitation. Such, indeed, on the face of it, would seem to be its character. Yet there is reason to doubt whether his whole intention was distinctly expressed by his language. The sect, of which he was a prominent member, had most bitterly persecuted Jesus, and had been as active, to say the least, as the Sadducees, in procuring his crucifixion. There is no evidence that the Pharisees, as a sect, were more favorably disposed towards the disciples, than they had been towards the Master; or that Gamaliel in particular had faith in their testimony; for he lived and died a Pharisee. Why, then, did he interfere to prevent their destruction, according to the design of others in the council? It cannot have escaped notice, that of two rival sects, nearly equal in strength, one will frequently countenance a third sect, for the mere purpose of crippling or injuring the other; not because it loves the one, but because it hates the other more cordially. The Sadducees denied the resurrection and a future life. Of course that sect was weakened by the conversion of any one to the gospel, which brought life



of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men:

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were

and immortality to light. And Gamaliel may have been willing to give the apostles an opportunity to preach the gospel, under the belief that the result would be indirectly beneficial to his own sect, by diminishing the strength of its rival. But if this were his object, he seems to have escaped suspicion at the time. His argument was marked by such sound sense, that it could not easily be controverted. It was successful then; and it is worthy of consideration and regard now and always.

36. *Rose up Theudas.* Who this person was, is not certainly known; as there is no distinct account of him by the Jewish writers. But, when it is considered that, for many years previous to this time as well as afterwards, the state of society was so unsettled in Judea, and insurrections so frequent, it is by no means surprising that historians should have omitted particular notice of a leader who drew around him so few followers. Josephus, besides describing many such scenes with more or less minuteness, testifies generally, that "at this time there were ten thousand other disorders in Judea, which were like tumults; because a great number put themselves into a warlike posture, either out of hopes of gain to themselves, or out of enmity to the Jews." — *Antiq.* xvii. x. § 4. But, though the transaction may not now be identified, it was doubtless recognized by the council; for the accuracy of Gamaliel's account was not questioned. It has been supposed by some, that the account here given is inconsistent with what Josephus says of the insurrection of one Theudas, which occurred some fifteen years after the crucifixion of our Lord. This objection is effectually answered by Barnes. "The name Theudas was a common name among the Jews; and there is no improbability that there were *two* leaders of an insurrection of this name. If it is im-

scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let

probable, the improbability would affect Josephus's credit as much as that of Luke. It is altogether improbable that Gamaliel should refer to a case which was not well authenticated; and that Luke should record a speech of this kind unless it was delivered, when it would be so easy to detect the error." ¶ *Boasting himself to be somebody.* Perhaps, professing to be the Messiah; for many such appeared in those days. And as it was generally expected that the Messiah would break the Roman yoke, it was easy for such an impostor to obtain followers from the disaffected Jews, who thus often engaged in insurrectionary movements. ¶ *Obedied him.* Or, believed him; that is, credited his pretensions, and became his followers.

37. *Judas of Galilee.* Josephus gives an account of this person, calling him a Galilean, and also a Gaulonite. When Cyrenius was required by the Roman emperor, about a dozen years after the period mentioned in Luke ii. 1—3, to take an account of the substance or property of the Jews, for the purpose of taxation, many of the people quietly submitted to the imposition. But "there was one Judas, a Gaulonite, of a city whose name was Gamala, who, taking with him Saddouk, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt; who both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty, as if they could procure them happiness and security for what they possessed, and assured enjoyment of a still greater good, which was that of the honor and glory they would thereby acquire for magnanimity." — *Antiq.* xviii. i. § 1. This insurrection, it seems, was quelled, and those engaged in it either destroyed or dispersed.

38. *And now I say, &c.* This is stated as the conclusion of the argu-

them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39 But if it be of God, ye can-

ment. It is observable that the cases mentioned by Gamaliel met the question in either form of which it was capable. If it was urged that the apostles deserved death as heretics, the case of Theudas was in point; for that impostor, or false Messiah, was destroyed with his adherents, without the interference of the Sanhedrim. Or if the allegation was that they were mutinous against the government, as endeavoring to excite an insurrection, the case of Judas was in point; for he also and his company were overcome, without any action of the Sanhedrim. In either case, there was no need of their adopting violent measures on the present occasion; and this was the conclusion which Gamaliel desired to impress on their minds. ¶ *Refrain from these men.* Have nothing to do with them. Neither encourage nor oppose them. ¶ *If this counsel or this work be of men.* If the work in which they are engaged be an imposture, a human device. If it resemble the cases of Theudas and Judas, before mentioned. ¶ *It will come to nought.* It will be ineffectual. It will perish and be forgotten. Such had been the result in the cases cited as examples; and Gamaliel rightly argued that the same result might be expected again in the same circumstances. His argument, to be sure, has not the authority of revelation; but it has that of sound sense.

39. *If it be of God.* If the apostles are truly what they profess to be; if God has really commissioned them, as he did the prophets of old, to speak in his name and proclaim his truth. ¶ *Ye cannot overthrow it.* It is idle to oppose God, or attempt to defeat his purposes. Some have vainly imagined that the Almighty is unable to accomplish some of his most glorious and merciful designs, on account of the perverse opposition of men. The Jewish Pharisee, by the feeble light of Judaism, had a more distinct perception of the truth, than such men, under the noon-day blaze of Christianity. What God determines to establish, no power in the universe can overthrow. The gospel of Jesus Christ was planted by God;

not overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles,

and every effort to uproot and overturn it has been unavailing. The Jews attempted to nip it in the bud, by the crucifixion of its promulgator. Through ages it has encountered opposition, under the various forms of violent persecution, scorn, ridicule, and flattery, by its open enemies; it has also had to contend with the misinterpretation, misrepresentation, feeble defence, and misguided conduct, of its pretended friends; and, in the present day, with the utmost gravity, it is proposed to go on to perfection, by identifying its miraculous proofs with the feats of animal magnetism, and superseding its revelations by the more full and perfect disclosures of a new generation of Christs, self-made and self-commissioned with incredible facility. Yet the gospel of Jesus remains, and will remain while the world lasts, to guide, instruct, purify, and encourage humble and trusting hearts, in life, and to solace the dying, by assuring them of a happy immortality. As it has successfully resisted both open and covert opposition, for nearly two thousand years, we may safely believe it was planted by our heavenly Father; for every plant not planted by him must be rooted up. Matt. xv. 13. Other forms of religion have been sustained through long periods by force; but none other, by its internal spirit and energy. Armed only with that living spirit infused into it by its author, Christianity has triumphed over opposition, extended its conquests, and thus, as well as otherwise, demonstrated its divine origin. ¶ *Haply.* Perhaps. A word now obsolete. ¶ *Fight against God.* Oppose the accomplishment of his purposes. Whoso engages in such warfare may be certain of defeat.

40. *To him they agreed.* They adopted his advice, so far as the lives of the apostles were concerned. But while they avoided inflicting the extreme punishment they had designed, they would not let the apostles depart in peace. Whether the work were of men or of God, they would not have those who were engaged in it disobey their commands with impunity. ¶ *Beaten*

and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 ¶ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

42 And daily in the temple, and

in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER VI.

AND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmur-

*them*. This was a common punishment among the Jews. The number of stripes was by law limited to forty. Deut. xxv. 3. And lest they should possibly go beyond the extreme limit, they diminished the number by one. See 2 Cor. xi. 24. This punishment was often administered in the synagogues, Matt. x. 17; and, in the present case, it seems to have been inflicted in the room where the Sanhedrim met, and in presence of the members assembled. ¶ *Commanded them*, &c. Having once given this command to the apostles, and having punished them for disobeying it, they could not forbear repeating it, without a tacit acknowledgment that the first command was improper or injudicious. They were too proud to do this. If they refrained from spilling blood, they would, at least, assert their authority as haughtily as before.

41. *Rejoicing*, &c. The punishment they had received was both painful and ignominious. Among men of honor, so called, a single blow of a whip or cane, or even of the hand, given as chastisement, is regarded as a disgrace, which can be removed only by mortal combat. Not so did the Christian disciples view the matter. Had they been scourged for wickedness, they would have felt humbled and disgraced. But to suffer for a faithful performance of duty, was regarded as honorable and a subject of joy. 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20. ¶ *Counted worthy*, &c. That is, that the Sanhedrim had given this public testimony to their faithfulness. They would have been grieved to have any suspicion of their sincerity entertained. The ruling powers had acknowledged them as followers of their Master, and had fulfilled in them his predictions, Matt. x. 16—22; and therefore they rejoiced. ¶ *Suffer shame*. A disgraceful punishment. ¶ *For his name*. On account of preaching his name, or attachment to him.

42. *Daily*, &c. See note on Acts ii.

46. They paid as little regard to the command of the Jews, as formerly. They resolved to obey God, at all hazards. ¶ *Preach Jesus Christ*. Or, Jesus the Christ. That is, that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah; — the doctrine so hateful to the Jewish priests and rulers.

## CHAPTER VI.

1. *In those days*. This phrase is indefinite, but indicates a period not long subsequent to the events previously recorded. ¶ *Was multiplied*. When the disciples were only twelve in number, journeying with their Master, it was easy for them to manage the scanty funds which they received from whatever source. Their wants were few, and easily supplied. And even when the number amounted to one hundred and twenty, Acts i. 15, the labor of distribution was not very burdensome. But after the Spirit was poured out, to the conversion of thousands, on the day of Pentecost and subsequently, and so many converts surrendered their possessions to the apostles, for the common benefit of all, it became a task of great responsibility and difficulty, to distribute to the whole company according as each had need, so that none should lack. Acts iv. 34, 35. In like manner, therefore, as Moses formerly desired relief from a part of his burdens, that he might give undivided attention to his great work, Num. xi. 10—17; so the apostles desired that others might be appointed to manage the temporal affairs of the church, that they might not be hindered in the discharge of the special service committed to them. ¶ *Murmuring*. A complaint. ¶ *Grecians*. It has been a question, what persons are included in this term. Some have supposed that Gentiles are intended, who had become proselytes to Judaism; others, that it means those who

ing of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*,

were Jews by descent, but resided in foreign lands and spake the Greek language; while others adopt a third and perhaps more probable supposition, namely, that both the before-named classes are included. Some of both classes were then in Jerusalem, having assembled to celebrate the recent feast of Pentecost; and some of both seem to have been among the early converts, Acts ii. 7—12. Besides, the word here used in the original seems perfectly suited to indicate both classes, while each by itself is denoted by other and more definite terms. ¶ *Hebrews.* Jews by birth and residence. ¶ *Their widows.* The common stock was designed for the benefit of all the poor; and poor widows were certainly in as urgent necessity as others. ¶ *Were neglected*, &c. It was thought that some partiality was manifested between the native Jews and those of foreign origin or residence, in the daily distribution of alms. Among so many, it would be almost impossible to proportion the distribution precisely according to the need of every individual; and it is not surprising that a jealousy should be excited. As the apostles were all native Jews, it may have been supposed that they were peculiarly attentive to the wants of the *Hebrews*. It should be remarked, that Luke does not say such an inequality of distribution actually existed, but only that such was the complaint of the *Hellenists*.

2. *The twelve.* The apostles; Matthias having been added, to complete their original number. They had doubtless felt the inconvenience and hindrance occasioned by the work hitherto performed by them; and they recommended the appointment of deacons on this single ground. Yet we may suppose their attention was particularly called to the subject, by the murmuring mentioned in the previous verse; and they embraced this as a favorable opportunity to convince the disciples that such an appointment was both proper and necessary. It was enough for them to distribute, while all remained satis-

and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest

fied; but when some began to complain, it was easily foreseen that the labor would become so much increased, in hearing complaints and satisfying the murmurers, that little time would be left for prayer and the ministry of the word. ¶ *The multitude of the disciples.* We need not suppose that all the disciples were assembled; perhaps only those are intended who had a direct interest in the matter, namely, those who depended on the daily distribution, for the supply of their daily wants; for of these there were doubtless a multitude. ¶ *It is not reason.* It is not reasonable. This is not the proper business for which we were ordained. We ought not to neglect our peculiar duty, in order to perform labor for which others are equally competent. ¶ *We should leave the word of God.* By the word of God is meant the gospel, called his word, because a revelation of his will and purposes by his beloved Son, the express image of his person, and confirmed by the testimony of his Spirit. *To leave the word of God* here means to abandon the preaching of the gospel so much as would be necessary, if they should devote a large portion of their time to the management of temporal concerns, and the personal care of the wants of all the poor. ¶ *Serve tables.* Literally, to provide food for the people, or distribute provisions for their tables. Very probably, however, the expression is here used in a more general sense, to indicate the superintendence of all the pecuniary concerns of the whole company. The use of the word *tables* in Matt. xxi. 12 is supposed by some commentators to illustrate this passage; but I am unable to perceive any striking similarity between the tables of the money changers, and those on which the disciples spread their homely fare, or between the business of brokerage or money-changing and the distribution of alms to the needy.

3. *Look ye out.* Select. As in filling the vacancy in the apostleship, so now in the election of deacons, the choice was referred to the brethren at large

report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

The example is worthy of imitation, in regard to all officers of the church. This mode of election was not only more just and proper in itself, but more satisfactory to the people, and more expedient for the apostles, than if they had made the appointment by their own authority. ¶ *Seven men.* Seven was regarded by the Jews as a perfect or sacred number; and this may possibly have influenced the apostles; but it is more probable that the number was thus fixed, because so many could conveniently and effectually perform the duties of the office. Seven also denotes many, indefinitely; see note on Matt. xviii. 21. But it seems to be used here in its strict sense; for just so many persons are named, as elected to the office. ¶ *Of honest report.* Literally, testified of, or witnessed to; that is, men known to be of good character, of good reputation for morality and integrity. ¶ *Full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.* The indwelling of the Holy Ghost, here mentioned, refers rather to the general influence of the divine Spirit (see note on Matt. iii. 11), than to that special manifestation of it by which miracles were wrought. See note on Acts i. 5. For, though it is recorded that Stephen was a partaker of such miraculous gifts, ver. 8, there is no evidence that similar power was given to all the others. The case of Stephen seems to stand as the exception, rather than as the general rule. The deacons were also to be men of good natural understanding, or men of prudence and wisdom. A man may be very pure and holy, and yet destitute of skill to manage important affairs; for the gifts of the Spirit do not necessarily enlarge the natural powers of the understanding. But to manage the financial concerns of the church, the apostles desired that men might be appointed whose minds were not only rightly influenced by a pure spirit, but naturally sound and judicious; men, in short, distinguished as well for good sense and practical wisdom, as for purity of heart. ¶ *We may appoint.* The selection was made by the people. But the official appointment, or perhaps rather the induction into office, the apostles reserved as their

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

prerogative, ver. 6. "Thus the rights of both were preserved, the right of the church to designate those who should serve them in the office of deacon, and the right of the apostles to establish the church with its appropriate officers; on the one hand, a due regard to the liberty and privileges of the Christian community, and on the other, the security of proper respect for the office, as being of apostolic appointment."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Over this business.* That is, to distribute from the common stock according to the wants of the poor, ver. 1. This was the special duty assigned them. They were not ordained to preach, but to manage the temporal concerns of the church. True, Stephen and Philip did speak in the name of Jesus; but they are not recognized by the apostles as commissioned evangelists like Paul and Barnabas. See Gal. ii. 9. The recognition of deacons, as an order of the clergy, is of comparatively recent date, and seems unwarranted by apostolic usage. It is doubtless well that they should aid both the clergy and the brethren, in spiritual as well as temporal concerns; for they are presumed to be selected from among the most virtuous and judicious of the church. Yet even this was not one of their official duties at the beginning. The line was drawn distinctly between the apostolical duty of preaching, or managing the spiritual concerns of the church, and the duty of distributing the temporal provisions, which was assigned to the deacons. "This office of the deacon (to whom the charge and care of the poor was entrusted) was translated from the Jewish to the Christian church. For there belonged to every synagogue three deacons, with whom that care was deposited."—*Lightfoot.*

4. *Will give ourselves continually.* We will devote ourselves exclusively to the work specially committed to us by the Master. Even attention to the daily wants of the poor, though manifestly a Christian duty, was regarded as a hindrance to the proper apostolical work. Others were equally competent to manage the pecuniary affairs of the

5 ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and

Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch,

6 Whom they set before the

church, and provide for the daily wants of the members. But others were not competent to perform the labor to which the apostles had been specially ordained, and for which they had been qualified by the instructions of their Master and the unction of the Holy Spirit. They rightly judged, therefore, that faithfulness in their office required their sole and undivided attention to its duties, without hindrance or distraction by temporal anxieties. ¶ *To prayer, and to the ministry of the word.* Or, to prayer, and the preaching of the gospel. These were their great duties. They were commissioned to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15. To sustain them in their mighty work, they felt the need of divine assistance, and imitated their Lord by communing in prayer with the Father of their spirits. And they prayed not for themselves alone. But as Jesus prayed even for his murderers, Luke xxiii. 34, so they also prayed for all men. 1 Tim. ii. 1—8. How faithfully they preached the word, the firm establishment of the gospel, in spite of the most violent opposition, remains as a perpetual memorial.

5. *The saying.* That is, the proposition to appoint deacons. ¶ *Pleased the whole multitude.* It may be that they received the proposition with the more favor, because they had witnessed the good effects of a similar course in the synagogues. See note on ver. 3. But apart from this, the measure was of such obvious utility, that it must at once have commended itself to their approval. ¶ *Stephen.* The ministry of this disciple was short; but it was noble, and afforded full proof of his fitness for the confidence reposed in him. The succeeding chapter furnishes evidence of his faith, his wisdom, his devotion to Christ, and his triumphant death, as the first martyr who laid down his life in his Master's service. ¶ *Philip.* The same who is mentioned in Acts viii. 26—40; xxi. 8. Nothing is certainly known of this disciple, beyond what is recorded in the Book of Acts. ¶ *Prochorus.* Of this person and the

four others named in this verse, history gives no account. We may safely presume they administered their office faithfully, as any dereliction of duty would have been noticed and rebuked by the historian, according to his usual custom. It may be remarked, however, that the names have a Grecian form, indicating that the persons, if Jews, were born in foreign lands, and were probably included in the term "Grecians," or Hellenists, in ver. 1. Perhaps so large a portion of the deacons were selected from this class, partly because they best understood the condition of the discontented, and partly to show beyond doubt that the "Hebrews" (ver. 1) had no disposition to wrong their foreign brethren. ¶ *Proselyte.* That is, a convert from heathenism to Judaism. This person, therefore, must be regarded as foreign, both by blood and by birth. Yet he was readily received as a Christian, notwithstanding the apostles were not yet convinced that the Gentiles had an interest in the gospel. It must be remembered, that proselytes to Judaism, submitting to all the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Mosaic code, were understood to be entitled to all the privileges of the children of Israel. ¶ *Antioch.* This city, situated in Syria, on the river Orontes, was built as early as the year 300 B.C., by Seleucus Nicanor, who named it in honor of his father Antiochus. It was, for a considerable time, the most powerful city in the East; but, after experiencing various vicissitudes of fortune, was subdued and nearly destroyed, A.D. 1298, by the sultan of Egypt, and became subject to the Turks. See Calmet. In this city, the disciples were first denominated Christians. Acts xi. 26. Frequent reference will be found to this city in the subsequent history.

6. *When they had prayed.* The apostles invoked the blessing of God upon the office established, and upon those who had been designated to perform its duties. ¶ *Laid their hands on them.* In token of their consecration to office. No new powers or gifts seem to have been imparted by this ceremony, which

apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of

the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 ¶ Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the*

was customary among the Jews, on similar occasions. But it was a public testimony of the apostles, that they approved the choice made, and recognized their brethren as fit and proper incumbents of their office.

7. *Word of God.* The gospel. See note on ver. 2. ¶ *Increased.* That is, became more widely diffused, or more effectual in operation. A striking proof of the fact is added in the last clause of this verse. How much *time* is embraced in this verse and the next, is not definitely stated; but probably, not many days. ¶ *Disciples multiplied.* The number was now several thousands. And what tended to a more firm establishment and wide diffusion of the gospel was the fact, that these disciples were gathered "out of every nation under heaven." Acts ii. 5. So that when the great persecution arose, shortly afterwards, Acts viii. 1, not only were the disciples scattered through Judea and Samaria, but many of them doubtless returned to their native land, and carried to their brethren intelligence concerning the blessed gospel, and the signs and wonders by which it was confirmed. ¶ *A great company.* Or, multitude. A large number. ¶ *Of priests.* Some manuscripts read, "of Jews." But it seems unlikely that Jews would be thus particularly specified, inasmuch as most of the converts were probably of this class. Very powerful must have been the effect of the gospel, to reach the hearts of the *priests*, and convert them. They had been, as a class, among the most violent persecutors of our Lord. Moreover, they loved the praise of men, and they knew this doctrine was unpopular and its advocates were objects of scorn and persecution. They knew also, if this doctrine prevailed, Judaism must fall; and on the preservation of this old religion, with its forms and ceremonies, depended not only their reputation, but even their living. Yet, under all these unfavorable circumstances, they were converted, acknowledged

their faith in the gospel, and became obedient to its precepts. They sacrificed all their worldly prospects, took up their cross, embraced poverty and reproach,—and gained the testimony of good consciences, trust in God, and a cheering hope of immortal life and happiness. This was truly a triumph worthy of special record. ¶ *Obedient to the faith.* That is, to the gospel. This use of the phrase is frequent, and well understood.

8. *And Stephen.* The death of Stephen occurred so soon after his appointment to office, that the historian naturally proceeds at once to record that event, with the circumstances which attended it. Up to this time, the Jewish rulers had used threats, imprisonment, and stripes, to silence the disciples. They are now about to shed blood. Would to God that professed Christians had never imitated their folly and wickedness! ¶ *Full of faith.* Full of confidence in God, and immovable in his belief that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. Some read, "full of grace," or enjoying the favor of God. ¶ *Power.* Miraculous power seems to be intended here. Probably Stephen was one of the hundred and twenty on whom the Holy Ghost descended, imparting power to speak with tongues and to perform miracles. See note on Acts ii. 4. ¶ *Wonders and miracles.* A common Hebraism, denoting miracles emphatically, or wonderful miracles. See note on Acts ii. 22. His miracles also were wrought publicly among the people.

9. *Synagogue.* See note on Matt. iv. 23. Of these synagogues, there were very many in Jerusalem; some say not less than four hundred. Besides those in which the native Jews worshipped, it is said that the foreign Jews also had synagogues in Jerusalem, in which religious services were performed in the language to which they were accustomed. This is by no means improbable. Many of the foreign Jews did not understand the dia-

*synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and

of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

lect of Judea; and when they congregated at Jerusalem to celebrate the great feasts, it is natural to suppose they would desire some place in which they might offer their daily oblations of prayer in their own language. ¶ *Libertines*. Much difference of opinion has been expressed concerning this class. Some suppose they were foreign Jews, residing in or near a place called Libertum, or Libertina, not far from Libya. Bishop Pearce offers some evidence in favor of this supposition, and adds: "They were Jews, no doubt, and came up as the Cyrenian and Alexandrian Jews did, to bring their offerings to Jerusalem, and to worship God in the temple there: Cuneus, in his Rep. Hebr. ii. 23, says, that the Jews who lived in Alexandria and Libya, and all other Jews who lived out of the holy land, except those of Babylon and its neighborhood, were held in great contempt by the Jews who inhabited Jerusalem and Judea; partly on account of their quitting their proper country, and partly on account of their using the Greek language and being quite ignorant of the Jewish. For these reasons it seems probable, that the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, had a separate synagogue, as perhaps the Cilicians and those of Asia had; the Jews of Jerusalem not suffering them to be present in their synagogues, or they not choosing to perform their public service in synagogues where a language was made use of which they did not understand." Others maintain that the *Libertines* were Jews who had been captives or slaves, and had again become free. The Romans gave the name *liberti* to manumitted slaves, and *libertini* to their posterity. It is known that many Jews had been in captivity, and restored again to liberty. But it is not apparent, it must be confessed, why this class should require separate synagogues. ¶ *Cyrenians*. Foreign Jews who dwelt in or near the city of Cyrene in Africa. See note on Matt. xxvii. 32. ¶ *Alexandrians*. Jews belonging to Alexandria, a city in Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great, and situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Lake Mareotis. This was once the capital of Egypt, famous for its schools of

philosophy, its splendid library, then the largest in the world, and for the magnificence of its public buildings. It passed into the hands of the Romans about 26 B.C., and was finally captured by the Turks A.D. 646. Its glory was then humbled, and it now "occupies only about the eighth part of the site of the ancient city. The splendid temples have been exchanged for wretched mosques and miserable churches, and the magnificent palaces for mean and ill-built dwellings. The city, which was of old so celebrated for its commerce and navigation, is now merely the port of Cairo, a place where ships may touch, and where wares may be exchanged."—*Robinson's Calmet*. It was in this city that the first translation of the Hebrew scriptures into the Greek language is said to have been made. It is called the Septuagint, because seventy interpreters are supposed to have been engaged in the work. ¶ *Cilicia*. "A country of Asia Minor, on the sea-coast, at the north of Cyprus, south of Mount Taurus, and west of the Euphrates. Its capital was Tarsus. A synagogue of this province is mentioned, Acts vi. 9; and as Paul was of this country, it may be thought that he was also of this synagogue; so that it is probable he was one of those who had been disputing with Stephen, and were overcome by the arguments of that proto-martyr."—*Calmet*. The probability is increased by the fact that Paul, or Saul, which was then his name, was present at the stoning of Stephen, having given his voice against him, and guarded the clothes of the executioners; Acts vii. 58; viii. 1. ¶ *And of Asia*. See note on Acts ii. 9. ¶ *Disputing with Stephen*. The subject of debate was doubtless the Messiahship of Jesus, and the truth of his gospel. The dispute may have been violent and angry, though the word used in the original means no more than fair and open argument or debate; and, indeed, the word *dispute* was not formerly limited to the bad sense so generally given to it now. See Acts ix. 29. The probability is that, like many other disputes or controversies, this commenced in a friendly spirit; but the adversaries of Stephen, being unable to sustain themselves



10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God.

12 And they stirred up the peo-

ple, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :

against the force of his arguments, became angry, and sought to overcome him by force; yet his side of the dispute was managed in a spirit of kindness throughout; and, even in the last extremity, he invoked a blessing on his enemies. Acts vii. 60.

10. *Not able to resist*, &c. They could not withstand the power of his arguments, framed with consummate wisdom, and urged with overpowering energy. This may indicate merely that Stephen had such a perfect knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, so plainly exhibited their fulfilment in Jesus as the promised Messiah, and evinced such ardent zeal in support of the doctrines which he preached, that his adversaries could neither doubt his sincerity nor answer his argument. Or, as some suppose, it may be intended that he received supernatural aid, and thus triumphed. If this be the meaning, the promise of our Lord was fulfilled, that he would give his servants a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist. Luke xxi. 15.

11. *Suborned men*. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The original has not necessarily a bad sense; but it manifestly has such sense in this place, and is properly translated *suborned*. To suborn is to procure coöperation, to allure. "Subornation of perjury is the offence of procuring another to take such a false oath, as constitutes perjury in the principal."—*Blackstone*. The course pursued on this occasion was similar to that which was adopted at the sham trial of our Lord. See Matt. xxvi. 59, 60. ¶ *Blasphemous words*, &c. It would seem, from ver. 14, that the charge against Stephen was not an unmitigated falsehood, but a misrepresentation of his language and meaning, which had the effect of an absolute falsehood. Such was the nature of the charge against our Lord. See note on

Matt. xxvi. 61. The Jews professedly, and perhaps actually, had a deep reverence for the authority of Moses, and for those institutions which he had established by divine direction. Any declaration, implying a lack of regard for that authority or those institutions, was regarded by them as blasphemy. Stephen had doubtless represented Jesus to be the Messiah, and of course as superior even to Moses in authority. This they would call blasphemy against Moses, however respectfully Stephen might have spoken of him. And as it was generally understood that, if the religion of Jesus should be established, a great change would be wrought in their institutions, they might represent an argument in favor of that religion as blasphemy against God, by whose direction those institutions were established. The falsehood of their charge consisted in misinterpreting and misrepresenting the spirit of the language used, instead of accurately repeating it.

12. *Stirred up the people*. Excited them, inflamed their passions. ¶ *Elders and scribes*. Religious teachers, some of whom also were rulers. See notes on Matt. ii. 4; xv. 2. ¶ *Council*. The Sanhedrim. The crime alleged was punishable by death, Lev. xxiv. 16; and the Sanhedrim claimed exclusive jurisdiction in such cases.

13. *False witnesses*. See note on ver. 11. The cry of blasphemy was enough to excite the populace. But when the prisoner was put on trial before the supreme ecclesiastical tribunal, the regular forms of procedure and a decent regard to appearances required that some specification of the offence should be made in support of the charge. The specification is made in ver. 14. The witnesses are called *false*, because their testimony did not represent the case in its true light. (1.) If they reported the exact words of Stephen, they still falsely accused him of blasphemy; because he

14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw

his face as it had been the face of an angel.

## CHAPTER VII.

**T**HEN said the high priest, Are these things so?

honored Moses as a servant of God, and would on no account bring a reproach against him, or the law given by him. See the following chapter. (2.) It is not probable that they did report his language accurately. Jesus had predicted the destruction of the temple and the holy city, by the Romans, but not by himself; yet Stephen is accused of saying that Jesus would destroy it; and it is not probable that he thus went beyond the word of his Master. Very probably he repeated the prediction that the city should be destroyed; but this was far from blasphemy. The prophets of old had done this previously, and their predictions had been fulfilled; yet none charged them with blasphemy. Nor is it probable that Stephen asserted that the "customs which Moses delivered" should be abolished. This was a matter which the apostles themselves did not then distinctly understand. And when they did understand it, they proceeded with the utmost caution and circumspection in communicating the fact to the people. Many years after this event, Paul had occasion to bestow much labor, in showing the propriety of abolishing those customs, before even the converts to Christianity could be convinced. What the witnesses testified against Stephen, "therefore, seems to have been the inference they drew from what he taught of the destruction he denounced on the Jews, if they continued in their unbelief. But it was a very precarious inference, as the city and temple had been destroyed before without any repeal of the law; and therefore they were false witnesses."—*Doddridge*. ¶ *This holy place*. The temple; or, perhaps, the city, for this also was called holy. ¶ *The law*. The law of Moses.

14. *We have heard*, &c. See note on ver. 13. ¶ *Change the customs*. That is, abolish a part or the whole of the institutions established by Moses, and introduce others.

15. *Looking steadfastly*. Earnestly;

the attention being excited by something unusual. See note on Luke iv. 20. ¶ *The face of an angel*. His face exhibited an angelic appearance, or such as was supposed to belong to an angel. Some suppose it shone, like the face of Moses. Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. Others, with perhaps better reason, suppose there was nothing miraculous in the case; but that conscious innocence, unflinching trust in God, and perfect self-possession and dignity, were so plainly depicted on the face of the prisoner, as to excite the astonishment of his judges. He was free from the embarrassment attendant on guilt; he met the angry glances of his enemies with an unblenched eye, and with a calm, composed, and dignified countenance. He stood, therefore, like an angel of light, conscious of his own rectitude and the approval of God. Had there been a miraculous shining of the face, it may be doubted whether even the Sanhedrim would have had the temerity to proceed with the trial.

## CHAPTER VII.

1. This chapter contains the manly defence of Stephen, before the Jewish Sanhedrim, and an account of his death, not according to sentence duly rendered by a competent tribunal, but by the violence of an excited and exasperated mob; which violence, it would seem, the rulers made no effort to prevent or control, but rather countenanced and approved. ¶ *Then said the high priest*. The high priest presided in person, at this time; and, so far as his feelings are indicated by his proceedings on former occasions, it may safely be concluded that he was ready to give the whole weight of his influence against the prisoner. John xi. 49, 50; xviii. 13, 14; Acts v. 17, 18. ¶ *Are these things so?* It must not be forgotten that this chapter is a continuation of the preceding, and is separated from it for no perceivable reason except to

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father

Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan,

avoid a very long chapter. Stephen was accused of blasphemy against Moses and against God, or against the holy place and the law. The blasphemy was alleged to consist in saying that Jesus would destroy Jerusalem or the temple, and change the customs established by Moses. The demand now made is, "Are these things so?" Equivalent to, "Are you guilty or not guilty?" Have you uttered blasphemy against God, and against his servant Moses?

2. *And he said, &c.* Two general remarks, concerning this discourse of Stephen, seem to be proper: (1.) There can be no reasonable doubt that the discourse is correctly reported, for substance. Aside from the inspiration of the historian, he was long the companion of Paul, who both heard the discourse, and would be likely to retain a vivid remembrance of it; and it cannot be doubted that he often mentioned this first Christian martyr, and his defence at his trial. So that Luke would, in this manner, obtain knowledge of all the material facts in the case. (2.) Some have imagined that Stephen was incorrect in a few of his references to Jewish history. Even if this were so, it does not affect the historian's credit; for he professes to record what Stephen said; and if he has done this, his veracity is not to be impeached. It should be added, however, that the elders and scribes, whose profession demanded that they should be familiar with Jewish history, do not appear to have disputed the truth of Stephen's declaration, in any respect whatever. ¶ *Men, brethren, and fathers.* A customary form of respectful address among the Jews. Though the proceedings of the Sanhedrim, on this occasion, indicated a spirit which should never exist in a tribunal of justice, yet Stephen, by his courteous and dignified address, manifested a disposition to respect and honor the constituted authorities of the nation. ¶ *Hearken.* The custom of thus bespeaking attention was not uncommon. See Acts ii. 14, 22; xv. 13; xxii. 1. ¶ *The God of glory.* A Hebraism, for "the glorious God." In the outset, Stephen acknowledges his belief in the glorious God, and his reverence for him; thus

indirectly repelling the charge of blasphemy against God. ¶ *Appeared.* It is not said in the Old Testament that God appeared to Abraham, but only that he had communicated his will to him, in the case here mentioned. Gen. xii. 1. But perhaps Stephen meant no more than that, by some striking display of glory, or power, or goodness, God made Abraham sensible of his presence, when the command was given to depart into a distant land. ¶ *Our father Abraham.* The Jews esteemed it a great honor, and of signal advantage to them, to have descended from Abraham. See note on Matt. iii. 9. By this reference to the patriarch as the *father* of the Jewish nation, a temporary soothing effect may have been produced on the minds of the judges. With this call to Abraham, Stephen commenced his epitome of Jewish history, and pursued it to the days of Solomon. ¶ *Mesopotamia.* See note on Acts ii. 9. In Gen. xi. 28, 31, the residence of Abraham, and "the land of his nativity," is designated as "Ur of the Chaldees." When he departed thence, his brother Nahor remained. Yet in Gen. xxiv. 10, the city of Nahor is said to be in Mesopotamia. Hence it may be safely concluded that, although the precise locality of Ur is not now known, it was anciently described indifferently as in Chaldee or in Mesopotamia. The explanation of this seeming inconsistency is not difficult. Though these two provinces, or kingdoms, were in one sense separate and distinct, in another sense Mesopotamia was, if not subject to Chaldee, yet in some sort dependent upon it, and reckoned as a part of it. Perhaps we shall not widely mistake, if we suppose this case not wholly unlike describing Boston to be in Massachusetts and in the United States; or perhaps rather describing Vienna to be in Austria and in Germany. ¶ *Before he dwelt in Charan.* This is the Greek form of the Hebrew Haran, a place where Abraham sojourned for a season, while on his way from Ur to the land of Canaan, and where his father Terah died. Gen. xi. 31, 32. Harar was in Mesopotamia, "situated in 36° 32' N. lat. and 39° 5' E. long., in a flat

3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

4 Then came he out of the land

and sandy plain, and is only peopled by a few wandering Arabs, who select it for the delicious water which it contains."—*Calmet*. Because it is here said that Abraham received the command, ver. 3, *before* he dwelt in Haran, some have supposed that Stephen did not refer to Gen. xii. 1, but to a previous command. But an inspection of the passage will relieve the difficulty. Abraham, to be sure, is represented as then dwelling in Haran; but it is not said that he received the command while dwelling there. The language is, "The Lord *had said* unto Abram," &c.; which, for aught that appears to the contrary, might have been said before he left the land of his nativity; and his journey thus far towards Canaan may not improbably have been undertaken in obedience to the divine direction.

3. *Thy country*. This word is used to denote a less or greater extent of territory, according to circumstances. Perhaps Abraham at first supposed he was complying with the requisition, by removing from Ur to Haran, though both places were in Mesopotamia. But he afterwards understood the command in a more large sense, and accordingly left Mesopotamia, or the land of the Chaldeans, and went into Canaan, ver. 4. ¶ *Kindred*. Abraham seems to have understood this command to require him to leave his relatives or family connections; but not, in its most literal sense, to forsake *all* his kindred, and to go among strangers entirely alone. Accordingly, he took with him his father Terah, his wife Sarah, and Lot his brother's son, and went to Haran. There Terah died. Sarah and Lot accompanied him to Canaan, thence to Egypt, and thence back to Canaan, where, on a subsequent division, Lot established himself in the plain of Jordan, and Abraham took possession of the "hill-country." See Gen. xi. xii. xiii. ¶ *Into the land*, &c. That is, the land of Canaan. When he received the command, Abraham knew not the land to which he should go, nor what trials or privations he might encounter on his

of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran. And from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell.

journey or during his residence. Nor is it probable that he had any distinct idea of the purpose to be accomplished by his removal. Subsequent events have indicated that purpose to have been the separation of Abraham from his idolatrous relatives, that he might be the head of a family who should receive and transmit to posterity the knowledge of the one living and true God. But this purpose could not have been foreseen by the patriarch. Nevertheless, he trusted in God, and obeyed the command, in full faith that whatever God requires is right. And this manifestation of faith is mentioned by the apostles, Heb. xi. 8, and frequently elsewhere, in terms of high commendation. See also note on ver. 5. Such faith should be exercised by all. When a command of God is distinctly apprehended, it should be obeyed unhesitatingly, with a firm confidence that it is right, even though we may not be able to perceive the purpose to be accomplished. And similar faith should be exercised in all his promises.

4. *Came he out*, &c. He is said to have come out, because he had left his native place and commenced his journey, notwithstanding Haran, where he dwelt for a time, was in Mesopotamia, or the land of the Chaldeans. ¶ *Land of the Chaldeans*. Particularly from "Ur of the Chaldees." ¶ *When his father was dead*. Terah, the father of Abraham, died in Haran, at the age of two hundred and five years. Gen. xi. 32. Here exists a chronological difficulty, which commentators have variously endeavored to remove. It has been supposed that Abraham was born, when his father was seventy years old; he would therefore have been one hundred and thirty-five years old, at his father's death. Yet, in Gen. xii. 4, it is recorded that he was only seventy-five years old when he removed from Haran, while the text asserts that this removal was after his father's death. To obviate this difficulty, it has been said that Gen. xi. 26 does not prove that Terah was no more than seventy years old when Abraham was born. He had

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised

attained that age before he had any children. But it is by no means probable that his three sons were all born at the same time, nor is there any evidence that Abraham was the eldest. For aught which appears to the contrary, he may have been the youngest son, and Terah may have been one hundred and thirty years old when this son was born. The fact that Abraham is first named forms no objection to this supposition; because the children in a family are not uniformly named in the order of their birth, by the sacred writers. Thus in Gen. v. 32, the children of Noah are enumerated as "Shem, Ham, and Japheth;" yet in Gen. x. 21, it is expressly affirmed that Japheth, the last named, was older than Shem, whose name is placed first in the list. In this case Shem was named first, probably because through him the descent was traced to Abraham, and of course to the Jewish nation. In like manner, it would be natural to name Abraham first among Terah's children, because he was the great progenitor of the Jews, whom they all claimed as emphatically their father. The superior dignity of his character, moreover, might properly entitle him to the rank he holds in the list, even though he were younger than either of his brethren. Another supposition is, that Terah lived many years after Abraham left Haran, but was accounted dead, having departed from the true faith. An instance of this form of speech occurs in 1 Tim. v. 6. "The Jews unanimously affirm that Terah relapsed into idolatry before Abraham left Haran; and this they denominated death, or a moral death. (*Kuinoel.*) It is certain, therefore, that from some cause they were accustomed to speak of Terah as *dead*, before Abraham left him. Stephen only used language which was customary among the Jews, and would use it doubtless correctly, though we may not be able to see precisely how it can be reconciled with the account in Genesis."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Into this land.* The land of Canaan.

5. *Gave him none inheritance.* Although the land of Canaan was promised to the posterity of Abraham, he

that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

himself did not receive possession of it. While he dwelt there, he used the land for his flocks and herds, by permission of the Canaanites, who were in possession. There is no evidence that he owned any portion of the territory, except a field and cave for a burying place at Hebron; and this he obtained by purchase, not as a gift. See Gen. xxiii. The faith of Abraham is the more remarkable for this reason; that, although he never received possession of the promised land, he continued steadfastly to believe the promise, and waited patiently until it should be fulfilled in his posterity. ¶ *Not so much as to set his foot on.* An expression denoting emphatically that he had no inheritance whatever in Canaan. See Dent. ii. 5. ¶ *He would give.* The inheritance was secured by promise of God; and believing that he who promised was able to perform, Abraham did not entertain the slightest doubt that it would be bestowed in due time. ¶ *To him.* Though Abraham did not become the actual possessor of the land, yet he dwelt in it, and, having enjoyed many of its benefits for the greater portion of the time during the space of a hundred years, was there buried with his wife Sarah, in the cave he had purchased at Hebron. So that the promise was fulfilled even to him, in a qualified sense. ¶ *Seed.* Posterity. ¶ *When as yet he had no child.* He was then, at the least, seventy-five years old, and had long been married; still he was childless. According to all human probability, he could not expect to leave posterity. Yet he seems never to have doubted the fulfilment of the promise. In this case, as through life, he gave implicit credit to the word of God, and thus obtained for himself the appellation of *the faithful*. In this respect, he is frequently presented by the sacred writers as worthy of imitation. We should never be discouraged by any apparent delay in the fulfilment of God's promises, nor by any circumstances which to us may *seem* inconsistent with their fulfilment. If we are certain that "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," we should not indulge the slightest doubt. Even though circum-

6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.

stances should exist, indicating as much improbability as in regard to Abraham's having posterity, or the passage of a camel through the eye of a needle, yet we should remember that with God all things are possible. Matt. xix. 26. Men often promise, and are unable to perform. Not so with God; what he hath said he will do, and what he hath promised he will assuredly perform. Numb. xxiii. 19.

6. *On this wise.* In this manner; to this effect. ¶ *Sojourn.* This word indicates a temporary residence, in contrast to a permanent habitation. See Lev. xxv. 6. The same word is translated *foreigners* in Eph. ii. 19, and *strangers* in 1 Pet. ii. 11. ¶ *Strange land.* A foreign land; a land not their native home. Both Canaan and Egypt were strange lands to Abraham; but, from what follows, the latter seems to be specially intended. The same idea is conveyed in slightly different terms, Gen. xv. 13: "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs." ¶ *That they.* Namely, the inhabitants of the "strange land." ¶ *Bring them into bondage.* Enslave them. The reference is doubtless to the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt, whence they were delivered under the direction of Moses. ¶ *Entreat them evil.* Treat them with severity; oppress them; be cruel to them. This use of the word *entreat*, though frequent in the Scriptures, is now obsolete. ¶ *Four hundred years.* This period embraces the whole time of the sojourning in a strange land, from the day when Abraham went forth from his own country until the deliverance of the Israelites from the house of bondage. It has been said by some commentators, that Stephen here indicates in round numbers what Paul more accurately calls four hundred and thirty years, Gal. iii. 17, and Moses in Exod. xii. 40, 41. Others, with more probability, suppose two distinct periods of time are mentioned. "The children of Israel were in Egypt only about two hundred and fifteen years; but from the time when Isaac was born (in whom

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

the promise began to take place, which God made to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13), to the time when the Israelites left Egypt, are computed four hundred and five years; which, for the sake of a round number, are called here and in Gen. xv. 13, four hundred years. In Exod. xii. 40, and Gal. iii. 17, mention is made of four hundred and thirty years; but then the reckoning begins, not at the birth of Isaac, but at the time when Abraham first went down into Egypt, namely, twenty-five years before the birth of Isaac; and this sum added to four hundred and five makes up the four hundred and thirty years." — *Pearce.* Substantially to the same purpose, with one slight difference only, is the opinion of Lightfoot: "There is a double sum of years mentioned concerning the seed of Abraham, — namely, four hundred, and four hundred and thirty, Gen. xv. 13; Exod. xii. 40. The four hundred and thirty was from Abraham's receiving of the promise to the delivery out of Egypt, and the four hundred was from the fifth year of Isaac to that delivery; then did Ishmael work, and then began affliction to Abraham's seed; and from thence they were in affliction and sojourning in a strange land, Canaan and Egypt, four hundred years. See the LXX. at Exod. xii. 40."

7. *And the nation, &c.* Various nations which oppressed the Israelites were punished for their wickedness. But the bondage in Egypt is here referred to, and the Egyptians were the nation specially intended. ¶ *Will I judge.* That is, I will punish. This word frequently indicates the execution of judgment, or, at least, involves its execution. As God will by no means clear the guilty, he will assuredly punish all whom he adjudges to be guilty. The Egyptians were visited with sore plagues and punishments before they would consent to liberate the Israelites from bondage; the water was changed to blood; the land was infested with frogs, and lice, and flies; the beasts were destroyed by murrain and blains; the vegetation

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day: and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

was cut off by hail and locusts; the face of the earth was enveloped with darkness, "even darkness which may be felt;" and the first-born of the Egyptians, throughout the whole country, perished in one night, "from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, — and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead." Under these circumstances, the Israelites were permitted to depart. But their oppressors, unwilling to lose such valuable property, pursued them, and were overwhelmed and destroyed, even Pharaoh and all his host, in the Red Sea. Thus remarkably was fulfilled the assurance of God, that he would judge the nation that should oppress the seed of his servant Abraham. ¶ *Come forth.* That is, from the house of bondage, or the land where they had been slaves. ¶ *Serve me.* Worship me and obey my commands. For several centuries, the Jews professed to be governed solely by the divine law, or what is generally called the law of Moses; and they would acknowledge no other. However much they violated its letter and its spirit, they professed to regard it with the highest reverence; and any apparent disrespect towards it, or any intimation that a more perfect law should take its place, was regarded as blasphemy, deserving capital punishment. See Acts vi. 11—14. ¶ *In this place.* That is, in the land of Canaan. This phrase is not found in the original promise. But the place had been identified by the events of the past, and was well understood by the Jews. Stephen may be supposed to have added this, for the sake of perspicuity, when addressing a tribunal which held its session in the land of Canaan, and in the very city where the public services of religion were principally performed; or, as some say, Stephen may have intended the locality as a part of the original promise, quoting the sense rather than the language, which was not uncommon. See note on Acts iii. 25.

8. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. A covenant between

man and man implies a mutual agreement for the performance of specified acts, and is generally made the more binding by penalties or forfeitures for non-performance. The covenant here mentioned differs from human covenants, in some important particulars. It was made by God for both parties, and was given by him to the other party. In other words, God promised to bestow certain blessings upon the posterity of Abraham. Gen. xii. 1—3. It was not, strictly speaking, a covenant with conditions, as some have supposed; but it was essentially a covenant of promise. The law given by Moses might be called a covenant of works, or a covenant with conditions. But to Abraham God gave a covenant of promise, unincumbered with conditions. The distinction between the two is clearly defined and illustrated by the apostle, in Gal. iii. 1—29. This covenant with Abraham is similar, in this respect, with that given to Noah, which is expressly called a covenant between God and men, though it consisted entirely in the promise of God that he would no more bring a general deluge upon the earth, — a matter of course not dependent upon any conditions to be performed by men; in token of which covenant, he set his bow in the clouds, for an everlasting memorial. See Gen. ix. 8—17. The covenant with Abraham is called the *covenant of circumcision*, because, when it was renewed, Gen. xvii. 1—14, circumcision was established as the token or mark that his posterity were the persons interested in the promise, and as an acknowledgment on their part that they received the promised blessings as a free gift from him. When parents caused their children to be circumcised, it was regarded as a public acknowledgment of their faith in the God of Abraham, their confidence in the fulfilment of his covenant or promise, and their recognition of him as the giver of the blessings promised or bestowed. ¶ *Twelve patriarchs.* Patriarch properly denotes the original father of a family or race of men. The title was applied to the twelve sons of Jacob, because each was the progenitor of a tribe in Israel, in

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house.

11 Now there came a dearth

which his name was perpetuated. See note on Acts ii. 29. In strictness of speech, it may be doubted whether the title is proper to any human being, except Adam. But it is often applied to those of his descendants whose posterity continued as a distinct family, acknowledging a common father. Thus Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of Jacob, are called patriarchs.

9. *Moved with envy.* Jacob regarded his son Joseph with undue favor and partiality, which unfortunately became manifest to his other children. As might have been expected, they were dissatisfied and jealous. In addition to this, Joseph had certain dreams, indicating that he should have precedence of his brethren; and he told them what he had dreamed. This increased their jealousy, and embittered their hearts against him. Gen. xxxvii. 3—11. These envious and unfriendly feelings, not being seasonably and effectually checked, resulted in an act of gross wickedness, disastrous and afflictive in its immediate effects, though finally overruled for the benefit of all the parties concerned. ¶ *Sold Joseph into Egypt.* They actually sold him to a company of Midianites, or Ishmaelites, who in their turn sold him into Egypt. Gen. xxxvii. 23—28. As his captivity in Egypt resulted from the first sale, the fact itself is charged to his brethren, who were justly accountable for it. ¶ *But God was with him.* "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. Though abandoned by his own brethren, tempted in the land of captivity, and slandered and persecuted by the tempter, because his virtue was proof against all blandishments and allurements, his heavenly Father watched over him, and made him to triumph over all the evil designed against him.

10. *And delivered him, &c.* That is, from prison and from disgrace.

over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no sustenance.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren: and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

¶ *Favor and wisdom.* Or, wisdom which procured him the favor of Pharaoh. Both the wisdom and the favor may be regarded as bestowed by God. See Genesis xxxix. xl. xli., for a full history of the events mentioned in this verse.

11. *Dearth.* A scarcity of provisions; a famine. Gen. xli. 54—57. ¶ *Great affliction.* The natural result of famine. Not only the physical pains of starvation are included in such affliction; but history demonstrates the fact that nothing more surely and violently upturns the very foundations of human society, and converts men into beasts of prey, than severe famine. Witness the account of a famine in Jerusalem, during its siege, given by Josephus,—*Jew. Wars*, B. v., ch. x. § 2, 3. ¶ *No sustenance.* No provisions; no means of sustaining life. The meaning is, that the famine extended over the land where they dwelt, and their provisions were so nearly expended that they were in peril of starvation.

12. *When Jacob heard, &c.* See Gen. xlii. 1—3. ¶ *Corn.* Grain; for in this sense the word was formerly used. Wheat is supposed to be the kind of grain procured in Egypt. See notes on Matt. xii. 1; Acts xxvii. 6, 38. ¶ *Our fathers.* Stephen gives an abstract of the history, in general terms, without entering into particulars. In fact, only ten of the twelve patriarchs were at this time sent into Egypt; for Joseph was already there, and Benjamin remained with his father. Gen. xlii. 3, 4.

13. *Second time.* When the second journey into Egypt was undertaken, in quest of provisions. At this time, ten of the patriarchs went; but, Joseph and Simeon being already there, all the sons of Jacob were once more assembled. Gen. xlii. 24, 36; xliii. 1—14. ¶ *Joseph was made known to his brethren.*



14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

15 So Jacob went down into

*ren.* He knew them at the first interview; but years and change of costume had so much altered his appearance, that they did not recognize him. At the second visit, when Benjamin was with them, Joseph could no longer restrain his feelings, but announced his name and relationship. For a detailed account of this affecting interview, see Gen. xlv. 1—15. ¶ *Joseph's kindred.* His relatives, including his father as well as his brethren. It is not said that Pharaoh saw them at this time; but he received information or obtained knowledge concerning them. Gen. xlv. 16—20.

14. *Then sent Joseph, &c.* Gen. xlv. 21—24. ¶ *All his kindred.* His father, his brethren, and their wives and children. Gen. ch. xlv. All the living posterity of Jacob were assembled in Egypt, and ample provision was made for the supply of their wants. ¶ *Threescore and fifteen souls.* Seventy-five persons. The number here mentioned by Stephen does not correspond with that which is given by Moses, Gen. xlv. 27. The explanation of this difference, given by Bishop Pearce, is substantially the same with that adopted by most commentators. "In Gen. xlv. 27 and Deut. x. 22, their number is said to be threescore and ten; and Josephus, in *Antiq. B. II.*, ch. vii. § 4, and ch. ix. § 3, agrees with this last account of their being only seventy in number; but the Greek version of LXX. (which Stephen here follows) makes them to be seventy-five in both those places of our English translation above referred to. The reason is this, that in Gen. xlv. 27, that Greek version has added a sentence to the text, in which five children of Ephraim and Manasseh are named, though the Hebrew copies say nothing about them." The names of these children are recorded in 1 Chron. vii. 14—21; Asbriel, Machir, Zelophehad, and Peresh, sons of Manasseh, and Shuthelah, son of Ephraim. Why Stephen followed the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew copy, we may not distinctly understand. But it is sufficient for us

Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of

that the Sanhedrim did not object to his statement, that it was incorrect, or drawn from an improper source. And it is also a fact that the apostles frequently quoted from that version, thus vouching for its substantial accuracy.

15. *Jacob went down, &c.* Gen. ch. xlv. ¶ *And died.* Gen. xlix. 33. ¶ *And our fathers.* The twelve sons of Jacob. The meaning is, that the whole family of Jacob dwelt in Egypt until they died. Moses gives no particular account of the death of Joseph's brethren; but, as the residence of the Israelites in Egypt continued for more than two hundred years, it is manifest that these patriarchs all died there.

16. *And were carried over into Sychem.* See note on John iv. 5, where this place is called Sychar. In this verse the brevity of Stephen's abstract of Jewish history renders his meaning somewhat obscure. The most obvious meaning of his language is, that Jacob and all his sons were carried to Sychem, and buried there in one sepulchre. Yet Moses states distinctly that Jacob was buried at Machpelah, near Hebron, in the cave which Abraham bought of Ephron the Hittite, for a burying-place. Gen. i. 13. And it is also testified that the bones of Joseph were taken by the Israelites, when they departed from Egypt, and carried to Shechem, or Sychem, and there buried in the place which was purchased by Jacob of the sons of Hamor. Josh. xxiv. 32. Hence it appears, that while Joseph was buried in Sychem, Jacob rested with his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, near or at Hebron, where indeed he was buried immediately after his death, long before his posterity departed out of Egypt. Moreover, Moses does not say that the children of Jacob, called, in ver. 3, "our fathers," were carried to Canaan for burial, but mentions Joseph only. This, however, presents no real difficulty; for he does not deny that they were buried there: he is wholly silent on that point. If the descendants of Joseph so highly regarded the memory of their ancestor, as to take his bones with them from Egypt through

money of the sons of Emmor, *the father of Sychem.*

17 But when the time of the

promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

the wilderness, to Canaan, the posterity of the other patriarchs would very probably cherish a similar regard for the memory of their ancestors, and adopt a similar course. But, whatever reasons may be best assigned, it is certain that the Jews, in the apostolic age, believed that all the patriarchs were buried in the land of Canaan. Josephus, who lived in that period, after mentioning the death of Joseph, says, "At length his brethren died after they had lived happily in Egypt. Now the posterity and sons of these men, after sometime, carried their bodies and buried them at Hebron; but as for the bones of Joseph, they carried them into the land of Canaan afterward, when the Hebrews went out of Egypt, for so had Joseph made them promise upon oath."—*Antiq. B. II., ch. viii. § 2.* A difference of opinion, however, existed among the Jews, concerning the burial-place of the patriarchs. While some held, with Josephus, that the eleven were buried at Hebron, with their fathers; others insisted that they were buried with their brother Joseph, at Sychem. Such was the opinion expressed by Stephen, whose authority may be considered equal to that of Josephus, even if he were not inspired. And this opinion is not contradicted by any of the inspired writers. ¶ *Abraham bought, &c.* A difficulty is here encountered of a more formidable character. According to Moses, Abraham purchased a cave and field of the sons of Heth, in Hebron; but it was Jacob who bought a burying-place of the sons of Emmor or Hamor. Gen. xxiii. 17—20; xxxiii. 18, 19; Josh. xxiv. 32. Various solutions of this difficulty have been proposed. Lightfoot supposes the language of Stephen to be elliptical: "Now, Stephen and Moses speak but the same thing, and intend the same meaning; only Stephen uses shortness of speech in relating a story which was so well known that a word was enough for a sentence; and he spake in a language which had its proprieties and idioms, which those that heard him easily understood. — So that though he spake so very curt and short as he did, yet to them that were well enough acquainted both with the story

itself and such Hebraisms, his shortness would breed no obscurity, but they would readily take him in this sense: 'And Jacob and our fathers died, and were removed to Sychem, and were laid in sepulchres, in that which Abraham bought for money, and in that that was bought from the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.'" Others suppose the text has been corrupted by some copyist, by the insertion of the word Abraham; and that the true reading would be, "which he bought," namely Jacob. Thus Pearce and others. But one difficulty attending this supposition is, that all the known manuscripts contain the word Abraham. Perhaps a third method would be less objectionable. Stephen is not supposed to have been inspired. In such a rapid survey of the ancient history of the Jews, especially when standing in peril of his life, it is not surprising that he should confound the purchases of two burying-places, and speak of them as having been made by one purchaser instead of two. But this supposition, if well founded, does not affect the credibility of Luke, the historian, or imply that he was not inspired; for if he recorded the language used by Stephen, his record is true, whether that language was strictly consistent with the facts in the case, or not.

17. *The time of the promise.* The time indicated by the promise; or the time when the promise should be fulfilled. The time was drawing near, though eighty years elapsed before the Israelites departed from Egypt; compare ver. 20, 23, 30; and forty years more were consumed during their pilgrimage in the wilderness, before the promised land was possessed. ¶ *The people grew, &c.* One portion of the blessing promised to Abraham was a numerous posterity. During this residence in Egypt, the promise began to be fulfilled; for "the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them;" insomuch that the king became alarmed, and said, "The people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." Exod. i. 7, 9.

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil-entreated our

18. *Another king arose.* The king reigning in Egypt, when Joseph was sold into bondage, was called Pharaoh; and the king who oppressed the Israelites, and pursued them, and was swallowed up with his host in the Red Sea, was called by the same name. But this was a name common to the Egyptian kings, as Cæsar was to the Roman emperors. At this distance of time it may not be possible to determine which of the Pharaohs is here intended. ¶ *Knew not Joseph.* This may be understood to mean literally, that this king had no personal knowledge of Joseph, or that he was born after Joseph died; or, perhaps more correctly, it may be understood figuratively, that he was forgetful of the good deeds of Joseph, or disapproved his measures, or was unwilling to extend to the Israelites the same favors and immunities which had formerly been granted to them by his predecessor.

19. *Dealt subtilly.* Deceitfully; or "wisely," as Moses records it, using the word in its bad sense. He placed over them task-masters, and imposed grievous labor upon them, hoping thus to check their extraordinary fruitfulness, and gradually to diminish their number. Exod. i. 10—14. ¶ *Evil entreated.* See note on ver. 6. This seems to refer to the general oppression and cruelty which the Jews suffered at the hand of the Egyptians. A special instance of evil treatment is added, to show how intolerable the oppression at length became. ¶ *They cast out, &c.* Some have supposed the meaning to be, that the Jews were caused to destroy their own children, to save them from the horrible oppressions which they themselves endured. But Moses gives no intimation of this sort. Even his own exposure, which is the only case mentioned by Moses, seems rather to have been designed for his preservation than for his destruction. See note on ver. 21. Pharaoh commanded the midwives to destroy all the new-born sons of the Jews. They disobeyed his command. He then ordered his people generally to cast into the river every son born to the Jews. Exod. i. 15—22. To this the

fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

20 In which time Moses was

text seems to refer. And though, from the construction of the sentence in our common translation, *they* might naturally be supposed to refer to *kindred* or *fathers*, yet when the Old Testament record is considered, it seems more proper to understand it as referring to the Egyptians; and such is the interpretation given by most of the ancient commentators. Indeed the original admits a different translation. Instead of "they cast out," Pearce translates, "in (or by) casting out;" and Hammond, "by casting out," which he justifies thus:—"He that evil entreated the Israelites did it in or by exposing or casting out their children; for so the infinitive mood, with or without the article, but especially with it, is to be rendered, after the manner of a gerund, *faciendo*, in or by exposing." To the same effect is the paraphrase by Doddridge: "He treated our fathers most injuriously, and cruelly contrived to cut them off from being a people, by causing all their male infants, in obedience to a most inhuman order that he published, to be exposed or cast into the river Nile." ¶ *They might not live.* They were exposed, for the express purpose of destruction. By this method, Pharaoh hoped to prevent the increase of the Jews, and thus reduce the remnant which might remain, to more abject dependence and servitude. But though his plan was *wisely* or cunningly devised, the crafty was taken in his own craftiness. The result of his plan was, that he educated Moses in his own court, and qualified him to become the deliverer of his kindred from bondage, and their guide through the wilderness. Thus does God often accomplish his purposes by the very means which men suppose will defeat them, and overrule for good what men design for evil.

20. *In which time.* In the time of severe oppression before named. ¶ *Was exceeding fair.* Very beautiful. Literally, fair to God. It is a common idiom of the Hebrews, thus to apply the word *God* to give intensity to an epithet, or to express some extraordinary quality of an object. Thus we read of "great mountains," Ps. xxxvi. 6; literally,

born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

21 And when he was cast out,

mountains of God: "goodly cedars," that is, cedars of noble or lofty proportions, Ps. lxxx. 10; literally, cedars of God: "an exceeding great city," or a great city to God, Jonah iii. 3. According to this idiom, the translation of the phrase, *exceeding fair*, is strictly proper. The Jews always represented Moses to have been very beautiful. Josephus says of him, when a child, that he had a "divine form," and was remarkable for his "largeness and beauty."—*Antiq. B. II., ch. ix. § 5, 7.*

21. *When he was cast out.* See note on ver. 19. Moses was not cast out or exposed by his parents, I apprehend, in order that he might perish, but rather that his life might be preserved. His parents knew they could not much longer secrete him; they also knew that if he were found in their house, and recognized as a Hebrew child, the subjects of Pharaoh would destroy him, in obedience to the sanguinary order. As the child was surpassingly beautiful, it seems to have been hoped by the parents, that those who should find him, not knowing certainly that he was one of the proscribed race, might preserve his life, and provide for him as their own. Accordingly, they did not cast him into the Nile, so that he might perish immediately; but they carefully constructed a little ark of rushes, covered with pitch to exclude the water, and in this frail yet comparatively secure vessel deposited their beloved child. Moreover, their daughter watched, that she might see what should be the fate of her brother, and report to her anxious parents. Exod. ii. 3, 4. All the circumstances, as originally recorded, indicate a wish, and even a strong hope, to preserve life. ¶ *Nourished him for her own son.* Or, provided for him as for a son. By the original account, Exod. ii. 5—10, it seems that Pharaoh's daughter recognized the child as a Hebrew; but, struck by its beauty and moved to compassion by its piteous cries, she formed the resolution to adopt and provide for it. The sister, who had not lost sight of her precious charge, proposed to find a nurse among the Hebrew women; and, having re-

ceived permission, she brought her own mother, who thus received her beloved child as returned from the dead. For a time Moses remained with his mother; he was afterwards carried to Pharaoh's daughter, who received him as a son, and caused him to be educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Josephus adds many particulars concerning this transaction, which were probably in accordance with Jewish traditions, whether founded on fact or not; such as, that the birth of a child had been predicted, who should exalt the Israelites and abuse the Egyptians, unless he were destroyed in infancy; that this occasioned the command to slay all the Hebrew male infants; that Pharaoh placed his diadem on the head of the child, when presented by his daughter, as a possible successor to his kingdom; that Moses threw the diadem on the floor, and put his foot upon it; that a soothsayer, being present, and fearing that Moses was the very child whose birth had been predicted as disastrous to the Egyptians, endeavored to persuade Pharaoh to destroy him; and that his protectress caught the child away, and preserved him. *Antiq. B. II., ch. ix. § 7.*

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,

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22. *Was learned.* Became learned, or was successfully educated. ¶ *All the wisdom of the Egyptians.* "What this consisted of is stated by various ancient authors; as arithmetic, music, astronomy, astrology, medicine, geometry, hieroglyphics, poetry, physics and metaphysics, and ethics. Egypt was universally regarded as the mother of the arts and sciences. Ancient civilization took its rise in that country, and was thence spread abroad through Greece, Rome, and other lands. The works of skill and power which still exist there, the pyramids, catacombs, and temples, excite the wonder and admiration of the traveller."—*Livermore.* ¶ *Mighty.* Powerful; distinguished for wisdom and energy. ¶ *In words.* He was "not eloquent, but slow of speech and of a slow tongue." Exod. iv. 10. Yet he uttered words of tremendous power, when he denounced the judgments of God against Pharaoh, and when he

and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to

spake in God's name to the Israelites in the wilderness. Or, the meaning may be, that Moses was so thoroughly educated in the arts and sciences, that his words had great influence over the people. ¶ *And in deeds.* This is generally understood to refer to the miracles, performed in presence of Pharaoh and in the wilderness. But perhaps it should rather be referred to the period before Moses was forty years old, while he dwelt in Pharaoh's court. Respecting this matter, the Old Testament is silent; and as Moses wrote his own history, it was natural that he should omit from the record such of his deeds as had no important connection with the great work committed to him. But Josephus relates, that, when the Egyptians had been defeated in battle by the Ethiopians, Moses was appointed general of Pharaoh's host, and obtained a signal victory over his enemies. In this military service, he is said to have manifested consummate skill and undaunted courage.—*Antiq. B. II., ch. x., § 2.* Whiston, the translator of Josephus, adds this note: "This history of Moses, as general of the Egyptians against the Ethiopians, is wholly omitted in our Bibles, but is thus cited by Irenæus from Josephus, and that soon after his own age: 'Josephus says, that when Moses was nourished in the king's palace, he was appointed general of the army against the Ethiopians, and conquered them; when he married that king's daughter, because, out of her affection for him, she delivered the city up to him.' See the fragments of Irenæus, *ab edit. Grab.* p. 472. Nor perhaps did St. Stephen refer to any thing else, when he said of Moses, before he was sent by God to the Israelites, that he was not only learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, but was also mighty in words and in deeds."

23. *Full forty years old.* The precise age of Moses, when he left the court of Pharaoh, is not stated by himself in the Old Testament. But the statement of Stephen corresponds with the opinion generally entertained by the Jews—"There are that say, that Moses was forty years in Pharaoh's palace, forty

visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and

years in Midian, and forty years in the wilderness.'—Tanchum in Exod. ii. The martyr speaks agreeably with the whole nation: 'Moses was forty years in Pharaoh's court, and forty years in Midian, and forty years he served Israel.' Beresh. Rabba."—*Lightfoot.* Moses died, at the age of one hundred and twenty years, just before the Israelites entered the promised land. Deut. xxxiv. 7. The pilgrimage in the wilderness continued forty years. Exod. xvi. 35; Numb. xiv. 33, 34; Josh. v. 6. Consequently, he was eighty years old, when he led his brethren out of Egypt. According to the general opinion of the Jews, Stephen divides this eighty years into two equal portions, assigning forty as the term of residence in Egypt, and forty, in Midian. See ver. 30. And there is no evidence that his statement is not strictly true. ¶ *To visit his brethren, &c.* That he might attain a more exact knowledge of their condition, and possibly with a design to alleviate their burdens, either by using his influence at court in their favor, or by leading them forth into another land. No intimation is given by Moses, in his own account of the affair, Exod. ii. 11, that he then supposed himself commissioned to deliver his brethren from bondage; but he does distinctly declare that, when he was commanded, years afterwards, to perform this work, he shrunk from the task, and would gladly have avoided the labor and peril. Exod. iii. 11; iv. 10—14. Yet Stephen intimates, that Moses believed himself appointed as a deliverer, at the time when he first visited his brethren in affliction. See note on ver. 25.

24. *Suffer wrong.* An Egyptian was smiting him. Exod. ii. 11. The whole nation suffered wrong, by being enslaved and oppressed; but this individual was suffering special indignity and violence, when Moses passed that way. Slavery has always had in its train many evils, besides mere personal restraint. While naturally benevolent men may treat their slaves kindly, men of a different stamp, like the Egyptians of old, do not hesitate to impose burdens on their unhappy bondmen, to the

avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian :

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that

God by his hand would deliver them : but they understood not.

26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove,

extreme limit of human endurance, and to smite and scourge without reason and without mercy. ¶ *Defended him.* He interfered, and, at his own personal risk, delivered his brother from the hand of the oppressor. ¶ *Smote the Egyptian.* That is, slew him. Stephen uses the milder term *smote*, perhaps lest he should unnecessarily excite the Jews, who had accused him of blaspheming Moses, Acts vi. 11; they might have represented the charge of man-slaying as derogatory to the character of their great prophet. Josephus also omits this fact in the life of Moses; and attributes the desire of the Egyptians to slay him, solely to the prediction of one of their soothsayers. See note on ver. 21. Perhaps he thought it would be dishonorable to the character of his hero, if this rash act were recorded. But Moses himself manifests no such delicacy. He performs the duty of an honest and truthful historian. As the evangelists subsequently recorded their own faults, with perfect integrity and simplicity, and each one his own rather than others' faults (see note on Mark xiv. 53—72), so Moses records his slaughter of the Egyptian, without any attempt at concealment. He even adds a circumstance, showing that the act was not entirely the result of a sudden affray, so as to be regarded as chance-medley, or of an instantaneous impulse of anger, wholly unpremeditated; for he says, "He looked this way and that way; and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." Exod. ii. 12. A man who slays another in an affray, or on the spur of a sudden provocation, does not look about him, to see whether he is watched. Doubtless, Moses did not act in this case, without reason. He cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of the promise, that the Israelites should be delivered from bondage; for he had not been degraded and abased like his brethren. He may have supposed that the hour of deliverance had come, and struck this blow as a signal of general resistance against the power of the oppressor; not knowing that God had

devised a very different and far more glorious method of deliverance. Whatever motive may have prompted him, he records the fact plainly and distinctly, but without condemning or justifying it.

25. *For he supposed, &c.* This is mentioned by Stephen, apparently as the motive of Moses, in slaying the Egyptian. There is nothing improbable in it, though Moses does not mention it. "The Jerusalem Talmud declares, that Moses slew the Egyptian by the spirit of prophecy, or that he did it by an extraordinary impulse from God; and Maimonides makes this action one degree of prophecy; and thus, as Stephen saith, it came into his heart (from God) to visit his brethren, ver. 23; and indeed otherwise he could not have justified this fact to God and his own conscience. Now Moses, knowing what an extraordinary person he had been in words and deeds, ver. 22, and what had been declared of him to his father, and by this action working deliverance to one of them, might justly hope they would look upon him as one appointed by God to be their deliverer."—*Whitby*. To the same purpose, Lightfoot, Doddridge, and others. If Moses cherished this hope, he was disappointed. His brethren not only neglected to attempt an escape from bondage under his direction, but manifested an unwillingness to have him interfere in their affairs, ver. 27, 28. It was not until a much later period, that he understood the true nature of his mission, and was enabled to make his brethren comprehend it.

26. *The next day.* Apparently with a design to make another effort to convince the Jews of his willingness to be serviceable to them, and to put at hazard, for their sake, all the privileges he enjoyed as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses repeated his visit to his enslaved brethren. ¶ *Unto them.* The contending parties, in this case, were Jews; see Exod. ii. 13. ¶ *As they strove.* Were engaged in a quarrel, either with or without blows. ¶ *Would have set them at one again.* Would have pacified them, and caused

and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away, saying,

them to become reconciled and friendly. Literally, would have persuaded them to peace. The common translation gives the sense correctly, according to the usage of the phrase *at one*, which was formerly in common use. Hence came the word *atone*, two words being joined together, and retaining the signification of *reconcile*; and *atonement* (at-one-ment), meaning *reconciliation*. The word *atonement* occurs only once in the New Testament, Rom. v. 11; but the same Greek word is translated *reconciliation* in 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, and *reconciling* in Rom. xi. 15. ¶ *Ye are brethren*. They were brethren, not only as members of the same human family, but as descendants of Jacob, and companions in affliction and adversity. They shared a common lot, and should have cherished a kindred feeling. The reason suggested by Moses, why his brethren should dwell in peace, would seem to be conclusive. Yet history, as well as every-day observation, discloses the fact that the duty of living peaceably with brethren and companions in a common lot is sadly disregarded. Contentions are rife among members of the same community, of the same church, of the same family. And it has long since passed into a proverb, that no quarrels are so intense and bitter as those which exist in families, or between those who have previously been intimate associates and choice friends. These things ought not so to be; and they will not be so, when the spirit of Christ influences all hearts. Let them who indulge a spirit of strife and contention with relatives, or indeed with any of the human race (for we are all brethren, since one God created us), know assuredly that they neither cherish the spirit nor copy the example of him "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 23.

27. *He that did*, &c. An attempt by a third person to reconcile contending parties frequently brings their united wrath upon himself; and its intensity

Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?

29 Then fled Moses at this say-

is in proportion to the degree of their exasperation against each other. It will generally be found true, moreover, that he who is chiefly in fault is more vexed than the other at any interference in the matter. In disputes concerning property, the party who is conscious that his claim is not equitable is less willing to submit the question to arbitrators, than he who has full confidence in the justice of his claim: he prefers rather a legal process, in the hope that he may succeed by some technical quibble. So in personal contests. The oppressor is more indignant than the oppressed, if any interference be made. In the case mentioned in the text, *he that did his neighbor wrong* was the one who protested against the attempt to establish peace; and he inquired, as many have inquired under similar circumstances, *Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?* To those who have ever attempted to bring quarrels to an end, or to reconcile contending parties, this question must sound very familiar; for with such or similar taunts have their well-meant efforts been met by those who should have been grateful.

28. *Wilt thou kill me*, &c. See Gen. ii. 14. It does not appear how it became known so soon that Moses had slain an Egyptian; perhaps it was reported by the Jew who had been rescued from the oppressor. In return for the friendly office which he attempted to render, he was taunted, as if he had committed one downright murder, and intended to commit another.

29. *Then fled Moses*, &c. "And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known." Exod. ii. 14. Perceiving that the act had become known to one who manifested a disposition to do him all possible harm, he at once perceived it would not be prudent to remain in Egypt; for Pharaoh would seek revenge, as soon as he should learn that one of his subjects had been slain. His judgment was correct; for "when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses." Exod. ii. 15. ¶ *Was a stranger*. Or a sojourner,

ing, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in

having no settled habitation. He did not regard himself as having a permanent home in the land to which he fled, but a temporary residence only. See note on ver. 6, where a different word is used, but of similar import. ¶ *In the land of Madian.* Or Midian. Exod. ii. 15. "The original and appropriate district of the Midianites seems to have been on the east side of the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea; where the Arabian geographers place the city Madian. But they appear to have spread themselves northward, probably along the desert east of Mount Seir, to the vicinity of the Moabites; and on the other side also, they covered a territory extending to the neighborhood of Mount Sinai."—*Robinson's Calmet.* ¶ *Where he begat two sons.* These were not children of the Ethiopian princess, whom Moses married, according to Josephus; but of Zipporah, daughter of Reuel, or Jethro, the priest of Midian. Exod. ii. 16—22; iii. 1. The sons were named Gershom, signifying a stranger, and Eliezer, help of my God. Exod. ii. 22; xviii. 3, 4.

30. *When forty years were expired.* See note on ver. 23. Moses does not mention the length of his residence in Midian, nor his age when he fled thither. But it is manifest that he was now about eighty years old, as the pilgrimage in the wilderness endured forty years, and he died at its close, at the age of one hundred and twenty. At the age of eighty, in our day, the activity of man is a matter of memory rather than enjoyment. But Moses was remarkable for strength, as well as beauty; for, when he had lived a hundred and twenty years, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Deut. xxxiv. 7. At an age which very few now attain, and at which fewer still enjoy any considerable portion of their natural activity and energy, Moses was ready to enter upon the great labor of his life, namely, to become the deliverer, leader, governor, and lawgiver of the children of Israel. ¶ *In the wilderness of Mount Sinai.* Moses says, Mount Horeb, Exod. iii. 1. The

the wilderness of mount Sina, an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight; and as he drew

apparent contradiction disappears, when it is considered that, as geographers tell us, Sinai and Horeb are two peaks or principal elevations of the same mountain, not far distant from each other. The whole region was mountainous, and a wilderness. Yet it afforded sustenance to the flocks of Jethro, under the care of Moses. Here he was called from the care of flocks and herds to become the leader and protector of men. ¶ *An angel of the Lord.* The word rendered angel signifies messenger, and is indiscriminately applied to superhuman and human beings, and sometimes to inanimate objects, when they bear a conspicuous part in the execution of the divine will. See note on Matt. i. 20. The word may here indicate the bush, or the brilliant appearance which encircled it; or it may mean an intelligent messenger of God. But one circumstance renders the former supposition probable. No particular office is assigned to the angel, except merely to attract the attention of Moses. The voice is expressly called the voice of God. It may not be improper to suppose, therefore, that by *angel* is intended no more than the sensible manifestation of the divine presence afforded by the flame, which, like that which rested on the heads of the apostles, illuminated, but consumed not. Acts ii. 3. ¶ *Flame of fire in a bush.* That is, what appeared to be fire. The appearance was evidently supernatural; because, although the general characteristics of fire were exhibited, there was no heat: "The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Exod. iii. 2.

31. *He wondered.* His special cause of wonder was, that, while the bush appeared to burn with fire, it exhibited no appearance of being burned, or scorched with heat. Exod. iii. 3. He witnessed greater marvels afterwards; but this was what first astonished him, and fixed his attention upon the phenomenon. ¶ *As he drew near to behold it.* In order to ascertain, if possible, the cause of this singular and perplexing appearance. ¶ *The voice of the*



near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32 *Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.*

*Lord.* He heard the voice, but saw not God. He was convinced that God spake to him, by the wonders wrought at the command of the voice issuing from the appearance of flame. Exod. iii. 4; iv. 1—17.

32. *I am the God, &c.* This language indicates the benevolence of God. Moses might surely trust that the God of his fathers would not injure him. The uniformity discovered in the encouraging salutations to men, when supernatural communications were made to them, ought not to be overlooked; but should be regarded as a testimony of the benevolence of our heavenly Father. See note on Luke i. 13. The language here addressed to Moses, besides assuring him of the divine benevolence, had a high spiritual meaning, which very possibly he did not then comprehend, but which is explained by our Lord in Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Luke xx. 37, 38. ¶ *Moses trembled.* However strong his confidence in God, as a father and friend, he was awed by a sense of the divine presence.

33. *Put off thy shoes, &c.* Or sandals. In the East, the feet were uncovered, as a token of respect, as we uncover the head. The sandals are said to have been uniformly removed when entering temples and other sacred places, and generally when entering the houses of superiors. "The Hebrew priests, like those of Egypt and other nations, performed their sacred duties with naked feet; a symbol of reverence and veneration."—*Jahn*. This command was therefore as readily comprehended, as we should comprehend the propriety of uncovering the head in presence of the most august and powerful earthly beings, much more in the immediate and visible presence of the King of kings. ¶ *Holy ground.* Ground sanctified by the manifestation of the divine presence. The ground there was no more holy in itself than any other spot in the wilderness. But it became

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their

sacred or holy, because God was pleased in that place to make a visible display of his glory. Thus Judea has for ages been called the "holy land," because it was the scene of the labors of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. The effect of this address to Moses was to impress his mind with deep reverence and awe.

34. *I have seen, I have seen.* The Hebrew writers not unfrequently repeat words in this manner, to give more emphatic force to the expression. ¶ *The affliction, &c.* See ver. 19, and Exod. i. 9—16. ¶ *Their groaning.* Their complaints and lamentations, under the cruel oppressions which they suffered. ¶ *Am come down.* This expression is accommodated to human conceptions. We almost necessarily conceive of God as above us, as well in position as in power and dignity, though we know that he fills immensity and pervades all space. Indeed, we have good reason to believe that there is a place where the divine presence is more peculiarly manifested than on the earth, which may appropriately be called his dwelling. See note on John xiv. 2, 3. And as this place is farther removed from the centre of the earth than we are, it is not wholly unphilosophical to regard it as *up*, whatever may be its precise direction; for the only rational idea of *up* or *down* which we can conceive, is the relatively greater or less distance from the earth's centre. Hence an approach to the earth, from whatever direction, is properly termed a *coming down* or a descent; and a departure from the earth, a rising or ascension. ¶ *To deliver them.* That is from their bondage. As God was about to make a remarkable manifestation of his presence and power on the earth, and in fact had already commenced the work by the appearance of fire and the audible voice seen and heard by Moses, he might well be said to have *come down* for this purpose. The manner of this deliverance is very

groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

35 This Moses, whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

briefly sketched by Stephen, probably because the circumstances were so familiarly known to the Jews. ¶ *I will send thee into Egypt.* An intimation that Moses was to be an active agent in the deliverance of his brethren. The miracles wrought in the wilderness of Sinai or Horeb, to convince Moses that it was the voice of God which addressed him, and that he was actually appointed, by a divine commission, to lead his brethren forth from the land of Egypt and the house of bondage, are here omitted: they are fully recorded in Exod. ch. iii., iv.

35. *This Moses, &c.* In this verse, Stephen calls the attention of the council to the fact, that their great prophet Moses, whose authority they professed to hold in such profound veneration, was at first rejected by his countrymen; thus preparing the way for his solemn charge against them in ver. 51—53, that their fathers had persecuted the prophets, and that they had filled the measure of their fathers by murdering the Holy One and the Just. See Matt. xxiii. 29—36; Acts iii. 13—15. Moreover, he thus exhibited their inconsistency in rejecting the claims of Jesus as a prophet, because he had been opposed and crucified, when they acknowledged and gloried in Moses, though they knew their fathers were rebellious against him, inasmuch that they all perished in the wilderness. Josh. v. 6. ¶ *Whom they refused, saying, &c.* See note on ver. 27. ¶ *Ruler.* Chief in dignity and power, whether military or civil. The same word is frequently translated *prince*, in the New Testament. ¶ *Deliverer.* He was so styled, because he was instrumental in delivering his brethren from bondage. But the original word “properly means one who redeems a captive or a prisoner by paying a price or ransom.”—*Barnes*. “Moses ransomed or redeemed the children of Israel, by the sacrifice and

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

37 ¶ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your

consecration of himself, and all his faculties and energies, to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt, and lead them into the promised land. He ransomed the captive Hebrews by paying no price, except that of his own labors, dangers, and sufferings.”—*Livermore*. ¶ *By the hand, &c.* By direction or by the instrumentality of the angel. See note on ver. 30. The reference is to the manner in which God indicated his presence to Moses, and caused him to attend to the voice which addressed and commissioned him.

36. *He brought them out, &c.* The particulars are recorded in the first fifteen chapters of Exodus. ¶ *Wonders and signs.* The mighty miracles wrought in Egypt, by the hand of Moses. See note on Acts ii. 22. ¶ *In the Red Sea.* The sea, by the mighty power of God, was made to afford a passage to the Israelites, and then returned and overwhelmed the pursuing host of Pharaoh. Exod. xiv. 21—31. ¶ *And in the wilderness.* For forty years the people were fed with manna, and refreshed by living water from the rock; their cloths waxed not old; they were guided by a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; and, indeed, were attended by an almost perpetual succession of miracles, during all their wanderings. Deut. xxix. 2—6.

37. *This is that Moses, &c.* The same Moses whom you acknowledge as a prophet of God, whom you accuse me of blaspheming, but whom I truly honor and believe,—this same Moses predicted the advent of a successor, the Messiah; and it cannot be regarded as disrespectful or derogatory to Moses, that one should believe his testimony, or acknowledge the Messiah whom he foretold. This would seem to be a sufficient defence against the charge of blaspheming Moses, which was one of the principal allegations against Stephen. From this he passes to the other charge,

brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the

which, when stripped of all disguise, was that he had repeated the testimony of his Master, that God would surely judge and destroy that guilty nation. This charge he does not deny; but justifies himself, by showing that such punishment might be expected for the crimes of which both their fathers and themselves had been guilty; and he reminds them that Moses himself had uttered a similar denunciation against them who should refuse to hear and obey the Messiah. See notes on Acts iii. 22, 23, for an explanation of the language of Moses here quoted.

38. *This is he.* The same Moses who uttered the prediction in ver. 37, is he who led the people through the wilderness, and gave them the law which he received from God. ¶ *Church.* A people separated from heathen nations, and, from the time of their father Abraham, kept from intermixture with strange blood; that in due time they might be fitted to receive and preserve, for the benefit of the world, a revelation of the divine character and will. The word here used signifies *separated*, or *called out*. It is to be understood, however, as including the whole family or assembly of Israel in the wilderness, and not in the limited and technical sense in which the word *church* is now generally used. ¶ *The angel which spake, &c.* It seems manifest that Stephen here refers to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. But Moses represents that to have been given by God himself, while Stephen says here it was given by an angel, and, ver. 53, by angels; see also Heb. ii. 2. This seeming disagreement admits of at least two solutions. (1.) Whatever a person does by an authorized agent, he is properly said to do himself; and the action may be indifferently attributed to the principal or his agent. So that, if God delivered the law by the hand of an authorized messenger or angel, Moses might properly say he received it from God. (2.) Angel may be used here, as in ver. 30, to indicate, not a person, whether human or superhuman, but an appearance by which the divine presence was indicated. Before Moses re-

angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

ceived the law, "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire." "And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." Exod. xix. 16, 18; xx. 21. The thunder, or lightning, or fire, or darkness, might properly be called an angel of God, in the Eastern manner of speech, because each was a messenger proclaiming his presence, in intelligible terms. Moreover, the *voice* which addressed Moses might, for the same reason, be appropriately denominated an angel. He did not see God; yet by what he did see, and by what he heard, he knew he stood in the immediate presence of God, and that God was communicating his will to him. Whatever produced this conviction on his mind, whether addressed to his eye or to his ear, whether fire, or thunder, or thick darkness, or a voice speaking to him, was actually a messenger of God, indicating his presence, and accomplishing his purpose, and therefore an angel. See note on Matt. i. 20. ¶ *The lively oracles.* Rather, the living oracles, or oracles of life. By oracles is meant the commands of God, or the law. See Rom. iii. 2. By the epithet *lively*, some understand that the law gave life, by promising length of days as the consequence of obedience; or, in a yet higher sense, by promising happiness, or blessedness, which is life in its true sense, as the reward of obedience. But it seems difficult to reconcile this interpretation with the language of the apostle in Rom. iii. 20; 2 Cor. iii. 6—9; Gal. iii. 21, 22. A different explanation is given by Barnes, which is perhaps to be preferred: "The word *lively*, or *living*, stands in opposition to that which is dead or useless, and means that which is vigorous, efficacious; and in this place it means that the commands were of such a nature, and given in such circumstances, as to secure attention, to produce obedience, to excite them to act for God,—in opposition to laws which would fall powerless, and produce no effect."

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

41 And they made a calf in

those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of* forty years in the wilderness?

39. *Our fathers would not obey.* Notwithstanding the many visible tokens of the divine approbation, the Jews were rebellious against Moses, and put his patience to very severe trials, in the wilderness. A special instance of their disobedience is here mentioned, when they proposed to resume the idolatrous customs of Egypt, and to worship idols. In what follows, the martyr in effect taught the council two useful lessons, which unhappily fell on unwilling ears: (1.) As Moses was a true prophet, notwithstanding his brethren were faithless and disobedient, so Jesus was none the less the Messiah, though rejected and crucified: (2.) As the Jewish nation was punished for their disobedience to the word of the Lord by Moses, and wandered for forty years, until "all the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way," Josh. v. 4; so it was perfectly reasonable to expect that an equally just retribution should be rendered to them who rejected Jesus, and refused to obey the word of God proclaimed by him. And this was a sufficient justification of himself against the charge of preaching that destruction was impending over Jerusalem. ¶ *Thrust him from them.* Disavowed allegiance to him; disclaimed all obligation to obey him. ¶ *In their hearts turned back, &c.* This may be understood as referring to the time when "the whole congregation of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and—said, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots!" &c. Exod. xvi. 2, 3. But from the connexion with the succeeding verse, it seems probable that Stephen referred rather to the desire of the Israelites to return to the worship of idols, after the manner of the Egyptians.

40. *Saying unto Aaron, &c.* See Exod. xxxii. 1. ¶ *Make us gods.* That is, idols, or visible representations of imaginary gods. Such images were highly esteemed by the ancients; and heathen nations even now fall down and worship them. It was customary to carry such images in warlike or other hazardous expeditions, under the impression that they would furnish aid and protection. Even Laban, the grandson of Abraham's brother Nahor, highly valued such images, and was both offended and grieved, when his daughter took them away; and the same regard for them was obviously cherished by Rachel, else she would not have taken them. See Gen. xxxi. 19, 30—35. ¶ *As for this Moses.* A contemptuous expression, indicating an utter disregard for him and his authority. ¶ *Wot not.* Know not; an old English expression, now obsolete.

41. *And they made a calf.* They furnished the materials for the calf which Aaron fashioned. As he performed the work by their command and as their agent, the work is properly attributed to them. Exod. xxxii. 2—4. ¶ *Offered sacrifice, &c.* They forsook the God who had conducted them through the Red Sea, and offered sacrifice to a senseless idol, after the manner of the Egyptians, whose principal divinity was Apis, represented by an ox. ¶ *And rejoiced, &c.* They celebrated their idolatrous worship, in the usual heathen form, by feasting, and shouting, and singing, and dancing. Exod. xxxii. 6, 17—19.

42. *Then God turned.* That is, he made an apparent change in his dispensations, and allowed the people to relapse into idolatry whom he had led forth from Egypt that they might learn and practise a more pure form of worship. ¶ *Host of heaven.* The stars, or heavenly bodies; so called on ac-

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

count of their great number. This kind of idolatry was very prevalent in the East. ¶ *Book of the prophets.* See Amos v. 25, 26. The twelve minor prophets were generally bound up in one volume; or the scrolls on which the prophecies were written were attached together, and styled the book of the prophets. The quotation from Amos which follows is not exact, but sufficiently so for the purpose. ¶ *House of Israel.* People of Israel; Israelites. ¶ *Have ye offered?* That is, ye have not offered. This interrogative form of expression frequently implies an absolute negative. The meaning probably is, that the Israelites did not offer their sacrifices with pure hearts and clean hands; but mingled, with their ostensible worship to God, either profane rites or secret adoration to idols.

43. *Tabernacle of Moloch.* Tabernacle here probably denotes the small case, or shrine, in which was kept the image of the god. It was customary thus to enclose images, or idols, that they might be carried, on journeys or otherwise, with less hazard or inconvenience. Perhaps the silver shrines of Diana were of similar kind. Acts xix. 24. *Moloch* is a name derived from the Hebrew word meaning *king*, and is supposed to denote the sun. It may be doubtful whether the Jews worshipped this idol in the wilderness; but they manifestly committed such iniquity in the land of Canaan. "Molech, or Moloch, was the idol of the children of Ammon, 1 Kings xi. 7; prohibited to Israel in a singular manner, Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2; yet they did worship him most familiarly, 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; Jer. vii. 31. And Solomon built a high place for him on Mount Olivet, before Jerusalem, 1 Kings xi. 7. The valley between was called Tophet and the valley of the sons of Hinnom, 2 Kings xxiii. 10, &c. This idol and idolatry is thus described by the Rabbins: 'Our Rabbins of happy memory say, although all houses of idolatry were in Jerusalem, Molech was without Jerusalem, and the image was made hollow,

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

set within seven chapels. His face was like a calf; and his hands were stretched out, as a man's that reacheth out to receive something from his neighbor, and they sat him over a fire; and the priests took the child, and put him between the arms of the idol, and there the child gave up the ghost.' D. Kinchi on 2 Kings xxiii. 10. 'He was made of brass, and was heated from fire under, till he was glowing hot; and then the priests put the child into his arms, and there he was burnt; and the priests made a noise, in the meanwhile, with drums, that the father might not hear the child's cry; and therefore it was called Tophet, from toph, a drum or tabor.' R. Solomon on Jer. vii. 31."—*Lightfoot.* See note on Matt. v. 22. ¶ *Star of your God Remphan.* This god is named Chiun by Amos, v. 26. Various explanations of this difference have been offered by commentators. The following is perhaps as reasonable as any. Chiun was the Hebrew or Syrian name, and Remphan the Egyptian: the latter was adopted by the Seventy, who made their translation, which Stephen quotes, in Egypt, as being most familiar to the foreign Jews. The language of Stephen indicates that this was a star-god; and it has been supposed that Saturn is intended, whose Arabic name is *Chevan*. ¶ *I will carry, &c.* As a retribution for idolatry, they were to become captives in a strange land. ¶ *Babylon.* Amos says Damascus. Both were far eastward from Judea; and the import is, that they should be taken captive by the eastern monarchs. The prediction was fulfilled, as the history of the nation abundantly proves.

44. *The tabernacle of witness.* The true tabernacle is here contrasted with the tabernacle of idols, indicating that the idolatry of the Jews was the more criminal because they had with them the tabernacle of the true God,—called the tabernacle of witness, inasmuch as it was a testimony to them that God was their leader and protector. "On the day that the tabernacle was reared

45 Which also our fathers, that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David:

46 Who found favour before

up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony; and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always; the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night." Numb. ix. 15, 16. This was a visible manifestation of the divine presence; and by this were the Israelites conducted through the wilderness: for when it remained stationary, they continued in their camp; and when it went forward, they journeyed. Numb. ix. 17—23. ¶ *According to the fashion*, &c. See Exod. xxv. 9, 40; xxvi. 30. Stephen had already professed his respect for Moses; and here he avows his belief that the tabernacle and the temple, ver. 47, were constructed in pursuance of a divine command, and were worthy of all honor. Of course, he could not justly be suspected of blaspheming either.

45. *Our fathers that came after.* The successors of those who perished in the wilderness. Only Caleb and Joshua, of all the men of war who came out of Egypt, were permitted to enter the promised land. Numb. xxxii. 11—13; Josh. v. 4. ¶ *Brought in.* They brought the ark, or the tabernacle of witness, with them into the land of promise; and, as they crossed Jordan, they witnessed another miraculous display of divine power, in connection with the ark. And to this testimony Joshua made a solemn appeal, in proof that the living God was with them, and would put them in possession of the land given to their fathers. Josh. iii. 9—17. ¶ *With Jesus.* The Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua. See Heb. iv. 8. It is unfortunate that the Hebrew word was not retained in our translation. ¶ *Possession of the Gentiles.* That is, the land of Canaan, possessed by the heathens who were driven out before the Jews, according to the ancient promise. ¶ *The days of David.* The meaning is, that the ark of the covenant was preserved by the Jews, in the tabernacle, until the days of David.

God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But Solomon built him an house.

48 Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

They believed their national safety was connected with the preservation of the ark; and when, on one occasion, it was captured by the Philistines, there was great lamentation, as if the glory of the nation had departed for ever. 1 Sam. iv. 10—22.

46. *Who found favor.* David was more prosperous than any other king of Israel. Although, in common with men, he had faults, yet on the whole he sustained an excellent character. He was a renowned warrior, a wise statesman, and a constant upholder of the public worship of God. Under his reign, the nation prospered, and increased in wealth and glory. ¶ *Desired to find*, &c. David thought it wrong, while he dwelt in a house of cedar, that the ark of God should continue to dwell within curtains; and he desired to erect a temple, in some degree fitted to contain that precious treasure. But he was admonished that this work should be performed by his son, rather than by himself. Accordingly, he forbore to execute his original design, but provided the means by which his successor might carry it into effect without unnecessary delay. 2 Sam. vii. 1—17; 1 Chron. ch. xxii., xxviii.

47. *Solomon built*, &c. Agreeably to the dying injunctions of his father, Solomon erected a temple, unequalled in glory and magnificence. When the sacred edifice was fully completed, it was solemnly dedicated to the God of Israel. 1 Kings v. vi. vii. viii.

48. *Howbeit.* Nevertheless. Stephen had already manifested his respect for the temple, by professing to believe it was erected by divine direction. Yet he knew his Master had said that the place where worship was rendered was of little consequence; that they who worshipped in spirit and in truth, and they only, were acceptable worshippers, whether at Jerusalem, Mount Gerizim, or elsewhere. John iv. 20—24. Hence he intimates, that, even if the temple should be destroyed, and its daily sacrifice should cease, God

49 *Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?*

would not be deprived of a dwelling-place, as he fills both heaven and earth; nor of worship, for the faithful soul may worship acceptably, wherever his lot may be cast. ¶ *The Most High dwelleth not, &c.* He is not confined or circumscribed in his dwelling. The highest heaven cannot contain him; much less any earthly edifice, however spacious or magnificent. His presence pervades all space; and wherever the voice of supplication or gratitude is uttered, his ear is open to hear, as well in the lowly cot or in the howling wilderness, as in the splendid temple specially consecrated to his worship. To this sentiment the council could not object; for precisely the same had been expressed by Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the first temple, which far exceeded the second in grandeur. 1 Kings viii. 27. ¶ *As saith the prophet.* Namely, Isaiah; from whom the succeeding verse is quoted substantially, but not literally. See Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

49. *Heaven is my throne.* The emblems in this verse are taken from sensible objects, to impress the human mind with some conception, faint though it be, of the divine majesty. See notes on Matt. v. 34, 35. The idea is, that God is supreme over all; that all parts of the universe are under his supervision, and subject to his control. And when we connect with this the idea that all his attributes, his justice, wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, are as infinite and eternal as his power, we approach as nearly to a true conception of his character, perhaps, as the present circumstances of our being will permit.

50. *Hath not my hand, &c.* As God has created the world itself, and all worlds, he surely does not need that his creatures should provide him a residence by the imperfect work of their hands. The prophet adds, in the place quoted, an expression importing that a contrite spirit is more acceptable to God than the most costly edifice or imposing forms of worship. Isa. lxvi. 2. The necessary counterpart of this declaration is, that the temple-worship of the Jews, if offered by men of hard, impenitent, and corrupt hearts, was unac-

ceptable, however pompous; and the same holds true in all similar cases.

51. It is generally supposed, that, at this point in his defence, Stephen was interrupted by the clamors of the Jews, who perhaps took advantage of his remarks concerning the temple, to renew their charge of blasphemy. It mattered not to them, that the language he used was almost literally quoted from their own scriptures. Though the priests and elders might not be so destitute of shame as to join in the outcry, they could easily encourage it, and stimulate the passions of the multitude. However this be, it is manifest from this abrupt transition in the manner as well as the matter of Stephen's discourse, that some demonstration had been made, which satisfied him that all attempts to conciliate his judges, or to obtain justice at their hands, would be utterly hopeless. Accordingly, he stops short in his historical sketch, and makes a sudden and tremendous application of the subject to his hearers. ¶ *Stiff-necked.* Stubborn, intractable. This epithet, literally referring to oxen refractory under the yoke, frequently occurs in the Old Testament, to denote the wilfulness and perverseness of the Jews; and the figure is very lively and expressive. ¶ *Uncircumcised in heart and ears.* Circumcision was a rite established by the covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 10—14. Outwardly, it was a sign of being a Jew, subject to all the requisitions of the law. Figuratively, it denoted purity of heart; and in this sense only was it of much practical value. See Rom. ii. 25—29. The expression in the text denotes those who disclaimed allegiance to God, who repudiated his law, and were unwilling to hear and obey his word. ¶ *Resist the Holy Ghost.* Or, Holy Spirit. They acknowledged that Moses and the prophets spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; in other words, that they were inspired. Yet, from the days of Moses, their race had been disobedient and rebellious, as Stephen had already proved by an appeal to their history. And now, when the same spirit spake by the mouth of Jesus and his disci-

always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just

ples, the Jews imitated their fathers, closing their ears and hearts against the testimony, and refusing obedience to the commands. ¶ *As your fathers, &c.* The treatment of Jesus by the Jews was strikingly similar to that which Moses received from their fathers, in many respects. The allegation here resembles that of Jesus against the same men, in Matt. xxiii. 29—36.

52. *Which of the prophets, &c.* So general had been the practice of the ancient Jews, to persecute the prophets of God, that Stephen calls on their corrupt descendants to point out, if they could, a single exception. ¶ *They have slain them, &c.* They have slain the prophets who predicted the advent of the Messiah. For example, it is said that Isaiah, who described the reign of the Messiah with peculiar minuteness, was sawn asunder by order of King Manasseh. See Heb. xi. 32—38. ¶ *The Just One.* The Messiah. The same whom Stephen preached, and in whose cause he was about to become the first martyr. ¶ *Of whom.* Namely, the Messiah. Fearless of the consequences, Stephen plainly and distinctly asserted that the same Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had slain, was the Just One, whose reign had been foretold by many prophets. Though he knew his accusers and judges were full of enmity and rage against him, he resolutely charged upon them the guilt of duplicity and murder. They betrayed Jesus by delivering him to Pilate on a false charge: they murdered him, by compelling Pilate to pass sentence of death upon him. See note on John xix. 12. Or they may be said to have betrayed him by hiring Judas to perform the treacherous act, and to have murdered him by their long-continued and finally successful exertions to destroy his life.

53. *The law.* Namely, the Mosaic law; perhaps including the additional communications of God's will by his prophets. ¶ *Disposition of angels.* "The word translated *disposition* does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means the *constitu-*

One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers;

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

*ting* or *arranging* of an army; disposing it into ranks and proper divisions. Hence it has been supposed to mean that the law was given amidst the various ranks of angels, being present to witness its promulgation. It should be added, moreover, that the Jews applied the word *angels* to any of the messengers of God, to fire, and tempest, and wind, &c. And all that Stephen means here may be to express the common Jewish opinion, that God was attended on this occasion by the heavenly hosts, and by the symbols of his presence, the fire, and smoke, and tempest." — *Barnes*. Lightfoot gives a different interpretation. It may be doubted whether it be as correct as the foregoing. Yet it is worthy of consideration. "That expression in Gal. iii. 19 agrees with this, 'ordained by angels;' and in both these places, it would be something harsh to understand, by *angels*, those heavenly spirits strictly and properly so taken; for what had they to do in the disposition of the law? They were present indeed at Mount Sinai, when the law was given, as many places of the Holy Scriptures do witness; but then they were but present there; for we do not find that any thing further was done or performed by them. So that the thing makes itself necessary, that, both in this and in that place, we should understand by *angels* the *messengers* of God's word, his prophets and ministers. The sense may come to thus much, namely: 'Ye have received the law unto the disposition of messengers, that is, that it should be propounded and published by ministers, prophets, and others; and that according to your own desire and wish, Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 25; xviii. 15, 16; and yet ye have not kept the law. Ye desired prophets, and ye had them; and yet which of those prophets have you not persecuted?' " ¶ *And have not kept it.* They were about to condemn Stephen on a charge of blasphemy against the law, Acts vi. 11—14; and yet they were transgressors of the same law. They held that a word spoken against



54 ¶ When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

the law deserved death; yet they disobeyed its positive requirements. See Matt. xv. 1—9.

54. *Cut to the heart.* Exceedingly enraged. See note on Acts v. 33. The whole discourse of Stephen was far from being pleasant to them. And when now, at the close, he so solemnly and indignantly rebuked their unrighteousness, they were goaded to utter madness, which they manifested by gnashing their teeth.

55. *Full of the Holy Ghost.* In this hour of extreme peril, it pleased God to sustain his servant, and to inspire him with fortitude to encounter the final trial, by granting him a more full measure of his spirit, and a miraculous perception of scenes invisible to the natural eye. ¶ *Looked up steadfastly.* Or, intently. Perceiving, from the ungovernable rage of his enemies, that there was no hope of deliverance on earth, he naturally appealed to God for protection; he raised his eyes to heaven, and they were intently fixed by the splendor of the vision presented to them. He saw, not what would preserve his natural life, but what rendered its preservation an object not to be anxiously sought. ¶ *The glory of God.* This phrase is generally used to denote some visible symbol of the Deity. What was its peculiar form or appearance is not mentioned; nor is it material. It is sufficient that he saw what he felt sure was the divine presence. Something more than an exercise of strong *faith* is manifestly intended here. His *sight* was impressed, in vision or otherwise, so that he distinctly *saw* what he relates. ¶ *And Jesus standing, &c.* He well remembered the countenance of his Master, and could not mistake the person. He saw him in a place of glory and honor. He had not doubted his Master's ascension to heaven; but he now had additional confirmation. He could no longer cling

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses

to his life; for he knew it was far better to depart, and be with his Lord.

56. *Behold, I see the heavens opened.* Whether his eye was miraculously enabled to penetrate through the firmament and behold glorious scenes beyond it, or whether this scene were impressed on his sight in vision or by representation, to him the view was actual and real; and he exclaimed, *I see* the glories of heaven. Can it, for one moment, be supposed that this man was an impostor? Did ever man sacrifice his life so foolishly as he did, on this supposition? Was he a man to throw away his life, for the purpose of leaving the world with a lie in his mouth?

57. *They cried out, &c.* Partly with the intention to prevent Stephen from speaking, and partly to express their horror at what they called blasphemy. It is not improbable that the members of the Sanhedrim joined in the outcry; for they would not willingly suffer others to go beyond them in outward respect of the law, or detestation of blasphemy. ¶ *Stopped their ears.* That they might not be polluted by the language of a blasphemer. It was customary among the Jews to indicate their displeasure against offensive language, by such outward signs. Thus the high priest rent his garments, to express his horror at the blasphemy of Jesus, when he uttered language somewhat similar to this of Stephen. Matt. xxvi. 65. ¶ *With one accord.* Unitedly. It is very doubtful whether sentence of death was passed upon Stephen by the Sanhedrim. He seems rather to have been put to death by a mad and furiously enraged mob. But the Jewish council was none the less guilty; for they made no effort to protect their prisoner against the rage of the populace. Doubtless they were well pleased to behold the murderous transaction.

58. *Cast him out of the city.* Pub

laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

lic executions were not allowed within the walls of cities; and in this case, though the Jews utterly outraged the spirit of their law, yet they scrupulously adhered to some of its ceremonial forms, as they had previously done in the case of our Lord. Lev. xxiv. 14; Luke iv. 29; xxiii. 26—33. ¶ *Stoned him.* Such was the kind of punishment which the law provided for blasphemy. Lev. xxiv. 16. Concerning the manner in which this punishment was legally inflicted, see note on Matt. xxi. 44. But it is manifest that Stephen was not executed in legal form. Instead of being thrown on his back, and crushed by a stone cast upon him from above, he was pelted with stones by the mob, until he knelt down and died, ver. 60. ¶ *Witnesses.* The false witnesses, who alleged that Stephen was guilty of blasphemy. The law provided that the witnesses, on such occasions, should cast the first stone, after which all the people were to assist. Deut. xiii. 9, 10; xvii. 6, 7. The mob seem to have observed this form. It is not unusual for a mob thus to observe legal forms, when committing the most violent outrages. ¶ *Laid down their clothes.* Their outer garments, or loose flowing robes, which would interfere with the free exercise of their arms, in casting stones. See note on Matt. v. 40. ¶ *Saul.* The same who afterwards became the devoted apostle Paul. He is here called a "young man," and in Philem. 9, "the aged;" but it must be remembered that about thirty years intervened between the two periods indicated. Moreover, it is not unusual in the scriptures to style a person "a young man," even after attaining the age of thirty or forty years. See 2 Sam. xiv. 27; xv. 7; xviii. 7, 32. His presence on this occasion, and the part he performed, sufficiently indicate his approval of the guilty transaction. He probably refers to this case, among others in his public confession, Acts xxvi. 10; and he distinctly names it, in his acknowledg-

60 And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

ment before the Lord, repeated by him in Acts xxii. 20.

59. *Calling upon God, &c.* The word *God* is here supplied by the translators, there being no word in the original answering to it. It is uniformly agreed, that a more proper translation would be, *calling upon*, or *invoking*, and *saying*, &c. He was about to die in his Master's cause. He had within a few moments enjoyed a vision of that Master in glory. In his utmost extremity, this appeal was natural; at once avowing before his murderers his constancy of faith and devotion, and expressing his firm and unwavering confidence that, in departing from earth, he should be received into heaven, according to the promise, John xiv. 3. ¶ *Receive my spirit.* That is, receive me to thyself; receive me to the place prepared for me, where I have seen thee standing. It is not unreasonable to suppose he still saw the vision of glory, ver. 55, 56, and therefore expressed the more confident assurance.

60. *Kneeled down.* As well to assume the posture of prayer, as from inability to stand, on account of the wounds already received. ¶ *Lord, lay not this sin, &c.* A close imitation of the prayer uttered by our Lord, Luke xxiii. 34. He denounced their wickedness in unsparing terms, 51—53; but for themselves he cherished love, and prayed for their forgiveness. Who can doubt the sincerity of this martyr? And who can doubt that he believed the fountain of grace which was sufficient for these sinners was also sufficient for all? ¶ *Fell asleep.* A usual form of expression to denote death. See note on Mark v. 39. In the Old Testament, the death of the patriarchs and others is generally described by saying that they slept with their fathers. Thus died this first Christian martyr. His ministry was short, but effective. His constancy and Christian spirit in the hour of death could not have failed to make a deep impression on the hearts of survivors.

## CHAPTER VIII.

AND Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered

## CHAPTER VIII.

1. *And Saul was consenting, &c.* Rather, was pleased with the destruction of Stephen's life. This part of the verse more properly belongs to the preceding chapter. ¶ *At that time.* Immediately after the death of Stephen, a great persecution raged against the disciples generally. This persecution is said to have arisen "about Stephen," Acts xi. 19. It would seem that the plainness and directness of his preaching so enraged the Jews, that they murdered him, as recorded in the foregoing chapter. Having been so successful in their attack on him, they appear to have determined to pursue the work, and rid themselves, once for all, of those troublesome persons who insisted that Jesus was unjustly murdered, and that punishment awaited his murderers. Hence the general persecution against believers. ¶ *The church which was at Jerusalem.* This was the first church of Christians in the world. In point of time it takes precedence, by many years, of that at Rome. Paul, who founded the church at Rome, was an enemy of Christ and a persecutor of his disciples, when the church at Jerusalem was established. *Church* is here to be taken in its general sense, as including the whole body of believers; not in its recent technical sense, as embracing the covenanted brethren, exclusive of the congregation. ¶ *All scattered abroad.* The persecution was so violent, that most of the Christians left Jerusalem, that they might escape its fury. They pursued the course recommended by our common Master, Matt. x. 23. Though the dispersion was general, yet the expression in the text must be understood with some limitation. Had *all* the Christians departed, there could have been little necessity for the apostles to remain in Jerusalem. That some did not depart, is manifest from ver. 3; for Saul

abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every

succeeded in finding some victims, when prowling about from house to house, seeking whom he might devour. ¶ *Judea.* The region in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, belonging to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; the southerly part of Palestine. ¶ *Samaria.* That part of Palestine lying north of Judea; the portion of the ten tribes. ¶ *Except the apostles.* As the apostles were manifestly at the head of the new sect, it might be supposed they would be more obnoxious than any others, to the fury of the Jews. The reason why they also did not flee is not mentioned. Possibly their miraculous power impressed the persecutors with awe. Or perhaps they felt bound to maintain their post, at all hazards, until the new church should be established on a firm foundation. For some reason they remained at Jerusalem, and God protected them. Here they directed the general concerns of the church, and listened to complaints and gave advice, whenever it was necessary. Acts xi. 1—18; xv. 1—29.

2. *Devout men.* Religious men. They may have been Christians; but, quite as probably, sober-minded Jews, who disapproved the violent proceedings of the mob; for it might have been as hazardous for the disciples to bury Stephen in that time of violent excitement, as to have buried Jesus after his crucifixion; which labor of love was performed by two who were not professed disciples. John xix. 38—42. ¶ *Carried Stephen.* The original word denotes rather that they prepared the body for burial. ¶ *Great lamentation.* The Jews were accustomed, at funerals, to indulge in many outward manifestations of grief. See note on Matt. xi. 17.

3. *As for Saul.* Rather, *But Saul.* He took no part in the customary rites of burial, and manifested no sorrow for the death of Stephen. He verily thought himself under obligation to do many things contrary to Jesus,

house, and haling men and women, committed *them* to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

5 Then Philip went down to the

and he devoted himself with energy to the work. Acts xxvi. 9—11. ¶ *Made havoc.* This is a strong figure of speech, descriptive of the ravages of wild beasts. It forcibly expresses the furious zeal of this young man, who was distinguished through life for energy of purpose and action. ¶ *Entering into every house.* That is, wherever he suspected that victims might be found. He was not content to apprehend those whom he found openly promulgating what he considered a blasphemous heresy; but he sought for victims, even females, that he might make thorough destruction, root and branch. ¶ *Haling.* Taking away violently and forcibly. This was a part of the persecution mentioned in ver. 1, in which Saul seems to have been one of the most active instruments, and especially serviceable to the high priest and elders. See Acts xxii. 4, 5.

4. *Scattered abroad.* To avoid the fury of this young zealot and his associates. ¶ *Preaching the word.* Literally, evangelizing the word, or proclaiming the gospel. See note on Luke ii. 10. The effect of this persecution was similar to that of all others which succeeded it. The means adopted to crush the truth became subservient to its more wide dissemination. Had the Christians remained unmolested in Jerusalem, many years might have elapsed before the gospel reached foreign lands. But they were driven forth, far and wide; and, wherever they went, they proclaimed the gospel of Christ. Thus were the adversaries foiled by their own weapons; and the cause of truth was promoted by the means which were designed to hinder it. The wrath of man was made to praise God, and the remainder of wrath he restrained.

5. *Philip.* One of the seven deacons, Acts vi. 5. There was an apostle of the same name. But the apostles remained in Jerusalem, ver. 1; and it is evident, from ver. 14—17, that Philip, who first preached in Samaria, was not

city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

miraculously endowed, in all respects, like the apostles. There is no reason to doubt, therefore, that this Philip was the "deacon," the same who is styled the "evangelist," in Acts xxi. 8. ¶ *The city of Samaria.* Rather, a city of Samaria, the article not being used in the original. At that period, there was no city bearing the name of Samaria; the one formerly so called had been utterly devastated by Hyrcanus, who, not content with the capture of the city, "demolished it entirely, and brought rivulets to it to drown it; for he dug such hollows as might let the water run under it; nay, he took away the very marks that there had ever been such a city there."—*Josephus, Antiq. B. XIII. ch. x. § 3.* It is uncertain to what city in Samaria the historian refers. ¶ *Preached Christ.* That is, preached that Jesus is the Christ or the Messiah. The Samaritans, as well as the Jews, believed that a Messiah was promised, John iv. 25. The great point, therefore, was to convince them that he had truly come, and that the way of life had been revealed by him. This was the great burden of apostolical preaching,—that Jesus was the Christ; in proof of which they urged his miracles, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to glory, and their ability to perform miracles in his name. On this ground, they claimed that he was entitled to full confidence and credit, in all things, as a messenger fully authorized to speak in the name of God.

6. *With one accord.* Generally. Very general attention was given to the preaching of Philip. The people were moved by a common impulse. In this respect, their conduct favorably contrasts with that of the Jews. The Jews would not receive the Messiah from among the posterity of David, while the Samaritans gladly embraced the blessing, even though the gift came through their national enemies. ¶ *Gave heed.* Gave attention, or attended. ¶ *Hearing and seeing.* Hearing the word, and seeing the miracles.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

7. *Unclean spirits, &c.* See note on Mark v. 1—20. ¶ *Palsies.* See note on Matt. iv. 24. Though Philip was destitute of some supernatural gifts bestowed on the apostles, ver. 14—17, he seems to have had power to heal diseases; or, rather, that power was manifested through him.

8. *Great joy in that city.* Not merely because the insane and paralytic were restored to soundness, but because a greater blessing was announced to them, of which these minor blessings were a confirmation. Like most of the people, who were not prejudiced by self-interest or deluded by others, they received the word gladly, and rejoiced in hope of abundant blessings through the Messiah. Mark xii. 37.

9. *Simon.* Concerning this individual, sometimes called Simon Magus, or Simon the Magician, much has been written, but little is known. He seems to have claimed supernatural powers, and for a time to have succeeded in persuading the people that his pretensions were well founded. Yet he was an impostor, and was detected. So much appears from what is here said of him. As to the speculations of the Fathers, and the early and more recent writers, they may be true; but the evidence on which they rest is not very satisfactory. "The Fathers accuse him of pretending to be the great power of God; of affirming that he came down as the Father in respect of the Samaritans, as the Son in respect of the Jews, and as the Holy Spirit in respect of the Gentiles; but that it is indifferent which of these names he went by. Jerome quotes these blasphemous expressions out of one of his books: 'I am the Word of God; I am the Beauty of God; I am the Comforter; I am the Almighty; I am the whole Essence of God.' He did not acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, but considered him to be a rival, and pretended himself to be the Christ."—*Culmet.* A portion of the language, professedly quoted from

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed,

Simon by Jerome, has an exceedingly apocryphal aspect: there is no doubt, however, that he exhibited a full measure of impudence. ¶ *Beforetime.* Formerly; before Philip visited Samaria. ¶ *Used sorcery.* Exercised the arts of the Magi, or Magicians. See note on Matt. ii. 1. "The ancient Magi had their rise in Persia, and were at first addicted to the study of philosophy, astronomy, medicine, &c. This name came afterwards to signify those who made use of the knowledge of these arts, for the purpose of imposing on mankind, astrologers, soothsayers, necromancers, fortune-tellers, &c. Such persons pretended to predict future events by the positions of the stars, and to cure diseases by incantations, &c. See Isa. ii. 6; Dan. i. 20; ii. 2. It was expressly forbidden the Jews to consult such persons on pain of death. Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6. In these arts Simon had been eminently successful." *Barnes.* ¶ *Bewitched.* This translation gives an entirely wrong sense, as the word *bewitched* is generally understood. The same word is rightly translated "wondered," in ver. 13. Simon wondered at the power of Philip, as much as the people wondered at Simon's power; and the one was just as much *bewitched* as the other. The same word is translated "amazed" in Matt. xii. 23; Mark ii. 12; Acts ix. 21; and "astonished" in Mark v. 42; Luke xxiv. 22; Acts x. 45; xii. 16. ¶ *Giving out.* Pretending; professing. ¶ *Some great one.* Some extraordinary or perhaps supernatural being, miraculously endowed. Many suppose he pretended to be the true Messiah.

10. *They all, &c.* All classes of men were filled with astonishment at the wonderful feats performed by this impostor, so perfectly was he master of his trade. ¶ *The great power of God.* Some understand this as the title given to Simon by the deceived multitude. But it seems rather to mean, that they supposed the mighty power of God was

from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.

manifested in him; in other words, they believed he performed his astonishing works by the aid of divine power.

11. *They had regard.* They esteemed him; they looked upon him with awe and veneration. ¶ *Bewitched.* See note on ver. 9.

12. *They believed Philip, &c.* The miracles performed by Philip, connected with his testimony concerning Jesus, produced a much stronger impression on the people, than had been produced by the arts of Simon; even Simon seems to have believed that the true power of God was now manifested, ver. 13. The miracles wrought by our Lord and his disciples were characterized by an openness, plainness, and power, which sufficiently distinguished them from the secret and mysterious jugglery of impostors. ¶ *Baptized.* They submitted to the rite which was commonly used at that day, as a token of adopting a new faith. See note on Matt. iii. 6.

13. *Simon himself believed also.* We are not to understand by this, that Simon became a sincere convert to Christianity; for what is here recorded of him, ver. 18, 19, affords evidence that his heart remained corrupt, and that he desired to acquire power chiefly to astonish the people still more, and thus increase his own popularity. By his *believing*, therefore, we may suppose that he was convinced he had encountered a superior, one who could *actually* perform works which he pretended to perform. ¶ *Baptized.* Perhaps to ingratiate himself with Philip, hoping the more easily to accomplish his own purposes. ¶ *Wondered.* See note on ver. 9. He was utterly astonished at the power displayed in the miracles performed by Philip.

14. *When the apostles, &c.* When the believers generally were driven

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come

forth by the severity of persecution, the apostles remained in Jerusalem, ver. 1. Intelligence reached them there, that a marvellous work was in progress in Samaria. ¶ *That Samaria had received, &c.* Not that the whole population had been converted, but that a large number believed and had been baptized. ¶ *They sent unto them Peter and John.* The special object for which these two were sent may be gathered from their conduct when they arrived, namely, to separate chaff from wheat, to preach the gospel, to confirm the souls of believers, and to impart to them the Holy Ghost, ver. 15—25. Two were sent in company, as the seventy had formerly been sent. Luke x. 1. And these two were well suited to be companions in such a mission. It may not be impertinent to remark, that this incident does not well comport with the fancy of the Romanists, that Peter was the Prince of the apostles, and the vicegerent of Christ. "This sending of Peter is a good argument to prove that he was not their superior as Christ's vicar. For then he might have sent any of them, or gone of his own accord, without sending. Peter was therefore inferior to the rest, and under the authority of the whole college of apostles, though he were equal to every one, and, in primacy of order, first of all. Whereas, if Peter had been superior, as Christ's vicar, they could no more have sent Peter than they could have sent Christ himself."—*Fulke, Conf. Rhem. Test.*

15. *Come down.* That is, from Jerusalem. On account of its elevated situation, and its dignity in the eyes of the Jews, they uniformly speak of going up to or down from the holy city. ¶ *Prayed for them.* The apostles did not claim power, of themselves, to communicate the gift of the Holy Ghost;

down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they *their* hands

but they prayed that God would bestow it. Unlike Simon, they sought not to exalt themselves; but uniformly confessed their dependence on a higher power. See Acts iii. 12—16. ¶ *Receive the Holy Ghost.* "The Holy Ghost, thus given, meaneth not his ordinary work of sanctification, and confirming in grace; but his extraordinary gifts of tongues, prophesying, and the like. And this is evident by the meaning of that phrase, 'the Holy Ghost,' in the scriptures, when it denoteth not exactly the person of the Holy Ghost, or the third person in the Trinity. For, as it is a Rabbinic expression, very common in the writings of the Jews, and in the use of the nation, and evermore in their use and sense meaneth only the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit mentioned, so doth it constantly signify in the scripture; and it is very hard, if not utterly impossible, to find it signifying any other sense. It is yet more evident by the very historical relation of Luke concerning the matter in hand; for, in Acts xix. 6, telling how Paul laid his hands upon certain men at Ephesus, and they received the Holy Ghost, he instantly explaineth what were the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that they received, 'for they spake with tongues (saith he), and prophesied.' And it is not possible to think but that Simon Magus (when he offered money for this fruit of the imposition of his hands, that he might give the Holy Ghost) saw some visible apparent sign of the gift, by the hands of the apostles; which if it were only sanctifying or confirming grace, how could he have seen it? So did they of the circumcision perceive, when the gifts of the Holy Ghost fell upon the Gentiles, Acts x. 45; for they saw it by their speaking with tongues, and magnifying God, ver. 46."—*Lightfoot*. In this exposition, most commentators agree. But whether these extraordinary gifts were bestowed on all the Samaritans who believed, may be doubted.

on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this

It seems improbable that Simon shared the gifts; but he had been baptized as a believer. Some have suggested that only so many as were designed for preachers of the word were thus endowed.

16. *He was fallen.* The Greek word rendered Ghost, or Spirit, being masculine, the same gender is continued. According to our idiom, we should say "it was fallen." As the gift was from above, or from God, it is said to come down, or descend, or fall. ¶ *In the name of the Lord Jesus.* Into a profession of the faith of Jesus, or of his Messiahship and resurrection. See note on Acts ii. 38.

17. *Then laid they their hands, &c.* No peculiar efficacy is to be attributed to this imposition of hands. The apostles did not even pretend to impart the gift by any power inherent in themselves. The laying on of hands when invoking blessings, however, had been a custom from ancient ages. See Gen. xlviii. 14. And the same custom continues, even to this day, when individuals are set apart to the ministry of the word. By laying their hands on the Samaritans, the apostles indicated the individuals for whom, in a special manner, they prayed. And the ceremony is to be regarded as a very significant sign, but a sign only.

18. *Simon saw, &c.* The operation of the Spirit became manifest, at once, by the speaking with foreign tongues or otherwise, so that Simon could see that a marvellous work had been performed. ¶ *He offered them money.* How widely did he mistake the character of the apostles, as well as the nature of the doctrine which they preached! He might well have been humbled and alarmed at the terrible rebuke of Peter, ver. 20—23. He had probably, like most jugglers and impostors, practised his tricks for money; and supposing the apostles to have learned from Jesus a power higher than he possessed, he was anxious to obtain it. He offered what he regarded as the most valuable equiv-

power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy

money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor

alent for the desired favor; with the expectation, doubtless, of being able to repay himself abundantly from the additional gains he would thus be able to acquire. From his whole conduct, it is manifest that, by his believing on Jesus or in the testimony of Philip, ver. 13, no more is intended than that he believed Jesus was more powerful than himself; and that he was far, very far from becoming a sincere, devoted disciple.

20. *Thy money perish, &c.* This severe rebuke is characteristic of Peter. His indignation, as well as horror, was excited by the impious offer of Simon. "This expression has been variously regarded by different expositors, as an imprecation, a prediction, a denunciation. The apparent tenor of the phrase is certainly imprecatory. It seems to say, 'Let thy money and thyself go to perdition.' It was uttered impulsively by Peter; and though it might somewhat conflict with the perfect spirit of Christian love for the sinner, yet we do not profess to predicate perfection of the apostles, as we do of their Master. At one time they were ready to invoke fire upon their enemies, Luke ix. 54. Paul uses, ch. xxiii. 3, an expression savoring strongly of imprecation; and he hesitates not to accuse Peter and Barnabas of unworthy compliances and dissimulation, Gal. ii. 13, 14. The apostles were men; and it is one proof of the divinity of the gospel, that, although they were comparatively uneducated, enveloped in Jewish prejudices, and marked by some imperfections of character, they yet wrought miracles, not by their own holiness, ch. iii. 12, and taught a spiritual faith far transcending their condition, education, and original characters. Peter's words in the text were severe and denunciatory; and perhaps it may be said, that, even if imprecatory, they proceed from a praiseworthy spirit. God has charged our nature with a latent fire of moral indignation, seemingly designed to put the wicked in awe, that they sin not; which results in sin only when it is allowed to exert a long and corroding influence upon the affectionate

sensibilities of the heart. Our Saviour himself appears not to have been destitute of this moral indignation, though immediately tempered with compassion. Mark iii. 5; Eph. iv. 26."—*Livermore*. I have inserted this note at length, because it embraces several points which seem worthy of attentive consideration. ¶ *The gift of God*. The power to perform miracles is here specially intended. The idea that God can be tempted or persuaded by money to bestow miraculous gifts, is not only absurd in itself, but argues a most mean and unworthy conception of the divine character. Something of the same kind is perceivable in the case of those who have imagined the endowment of churches or hospitals would atone for a sinful life, or the bestowment of goods on the church purchase exemption from just punishment. The gifts of God are not to be purchased by money. Those who receive spiritual blessings receive them without money and without price. Isa. lv. 1; John xvii. 2; Rom. xi. 35, 36; Eph. ii. 7—9. "Salvation, like every other blessing, will be his *gift*; and if ever received, we must be willing to accept it on his own terms, at his own time, and in his own way. We are without merit; and if saved, it will be by the sovereign grace of God."—*Barnes*. Such, I apprehend, is the true doctrine of the gospel. And when it shall be heartily embraced by all Christians, and its spirit shall be thoroughly inwrought into their souls, a vast amount of spiritual pride and pharisaical haughtiness will disappear, and the Christian graces of humility and gratitude will flourish more abundantly. It may be added that the name of Simon, as well as the memory of his crime, is still perpetuated in those branches of the church where ecclesiastical preferment may be purchased by money; such purchase being denominated *Simony*.

21. *Neither part nor lot*. To express an idea the more emphatically, the Hebrews often indulge a repetition of nearly synonymous terms. See 2 Sam. xx. 1. The meaning is, no portion of this matter belongs to thee. ¶ *In this*



lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy

*matter.* Literally, in this *word*, *logō* (*λόγῳ*), or *thing*. See note on Matt. iv. 4. Most commentators interpret this to mean, that Simon had no part or lot in the *word* which the apostles preached, namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ; that he was not a Christian, and had no interest in the promises and joys of the gospel. But, however general this interpretation, its correctness may well be doubted. The reason assigned why Simon was cut off from all interest in the gospel is insufficient. It is said he was a vile sinner. Granted. And so were the Jews who denied the Holy One and the Just, and crucified him in the most disgraceful manner. I am unable to perceive that it was a more grave crime in Simon, utterly unacquainted as he had hitherto been with Jesus and his gospel, to propose buying miraculous powers with money, than it was in the Jews, who knew the purity of his life, the miraculous works by which he was demonstrated to be the Son of God, and his instructions, such as no man had ever before uttered, — with all this knowledge, to oppose, and persecute, and put him to a shameful death. Yet he prayed for their forgiveness, that they might have an interest in his gospel; and to them *first* was the gospel preached, after his resurrection, that they might be turned from their iniquities. Luke xxiii. 34; Acts iii. 26. To say nothing, then, of the very important fact, that the great object of our Saviour's mission was to *save sinners*, and regarding only the comparative guilt of Simon and the persecuting Jews, I see no sufficient reason why he should be excluded from all interest in the gospel, while they were invited and urged to partake of its blessings. Moreover, the construction of the passage itself indicates a different interpretation: "Thou hast no part or lot in this matter." In what matter? Plainly, in the subject of conversation. But they had not at that time been discoursing concerning the gospel generally, or its promises in particular. The only subject of conversation between the apostles and Simon, so far as the record shows, was the power of imparting miraculous gifts,

wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

as Simon understood the matter, or of being the medium through which they were bestowed, as the apostles understood it. This privilege or power Simon proposed to purchase; and Peter indignantly spurned his offer, and assured him he had no part or lot in the matter. He was not a fit person to obtain such a privilege, by purchase or otherwise; for his heart was not right, his motives were corrupt and altogether mercenary. Such I consider the most natural interpretation of the passage, and it seems more harmonious than the other with the general spirit of the gospel. ¶ *Thy heart is not right*, &c. Doubtless the heart of Simon was sinful in many respects; but the reference seems here to be to a single point, the mercenary spirit which led him to regard the miraculous energy of the Holy Spirit as an article of merchandise. This is the special wickedness that Peter charges upon Simon, in ver. 20, and of which he exhorts him to repent, in ver. 22. It is fair to conclude that the same wickedness is here meant.

22. *Repent.* See note on Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *This thy wickedness.* The thought and attempt, namely, to purchase the gift of God with money. He should abandon those low and grovelling ideas of God which he had hitherto entertained, and by study and meditation, by attention to the instruction of his authorized messengers, and by all means within his reach, endeavor to obtain correct conceptions of the Deity. ¶ *Perhaps.* The doubt here implied has reference to Simon's disposition to pray, not to God's willingness to forgive. Though the sins of men be as scarlet, yet, if they repent and ask forgiveness, they shall not ask in vain. Isa. i. 18—20; Ezek. xviii. 21, 22; John vi. 37. But the sin of Simon somewhat resembled the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; and consequently, in human view, his repentance was more difficult and doubtful. See note on Matt. xii. 31, 32. ¶ *Thought of thine heart*, &c. The thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. This was the special sin for which Simon was rebuked, and to this the reference here is manifest.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

23. *Gall of bitterness.* A Hebraism, to express extraordinary or excessive bitterness. ¶ *Bond of iniquity.* Slavery to sin. The figure is taken from the manner in which prisoners were anciently secured by a chain; one end of which was firmly fastened to the arm of the prisoner, and the other to the arm of the soldier to whose charge he was committed. The meaning of the whole verse seems to be this; that Simon was entirely destitute of a Christian spirit, and was feeding on the bitter fruits of sinfulness. He was destitute of that humility, benevolence, willingness to obey God and to submit to any and all sacrifices of personal convenience or emolument, without which none could be disciples. On the contrary, he was completely under the dominion of his sinful thoughts and habits; he was selfish, ambitious, proud, avaricious, and hypocritical. The proposition made by him sufficiently indicated his ignorance of the divine character, his want of conformity to the divine law, and his utter unfitness for the apostolical office, or the exercise of those powers which had been bestowed on the apostles, — which powers he had sought to obtain by asking that the Holy Ghost might be communicated by the laying on of his hands, ver. 19.

24. *Pray ye, &c.* Simon was directed to pray for himself, ver. 22: instead of this, he desired the apostles to intercede for him. He was evidently alarmed by the solemn rebuke of Peter; and believing that they, who were endowed with such supernatural powers, could exert more influence than himself with the God whom they worshipped, he besought them to pray for him. ¶ *That none of the things, &c.* That is, that none of the punishments to which Peter had alluded might be inflicted. Simon seems to have been altogether more desirous to escape the *punishment* of his sin, than to be cleansed from sin itself. Very probably he resolved never to repeat the request

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise,

which had drawn forth such a scorching rebuke; but there is no evidence of his determination to forsake his iniquitous practices generally. The same error has been prevalent in all subsequent ages. In the present day, even in the Christian church, are many who imagine that the very essence of salvation consists in a deliverance from the *punishment* of sins committed. So fondly are they wedded to this opinion, that they are ready to deny the Christian name to such as believe all men will certainly be punished for the sins which they commit, and that salvation consists in deliverance and purification from sin, or sinfulness. They insist that, if all must be punished for their sins, Christ died in vain, and cannot be regarded as a Saviour. A denial of salvation from punishment, therefore, is considered equivalent to a denial of the Saviour. Such persons manifest more horror of punishment than of sin; and, like Simon, seek chiefly exemption from punishment, instead of striving and praying for holiness. See note on Matt. i. 21.

25. *And they.* Peter and John. ¶ *Testified, &c.* They not only laid their hands on those who had already been baptized, and prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost, ver. 15—17, but they also testified, here as elsewhere, the resurrection of Jesus, and preached the gospel to the Samaritans. ¶ *Returned to Jerusalem.* The apostles maintained their post at Jerusalem, probably because they considered it indispensably necessary to establish the doctrine of the resurrection in the very place where the fact occurred, in order to its more ready and more firm establishment in other regions. Whatever may have been their principal motive, they remained in Jerusalem, guiding and directing the affairs of the Christian church, even as the Sanhedrim exercised similar control over the Jewish church. ¶ *Many villages, &c.* On their way down from Jerusalem, ver.

and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose, and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an

14, 15, the apostles made no unnecessary delay. But on their return, having accomplished the main purpose of their journey, they tarried and taught in several villages.

26. *The angel of the Lord.* Or, messenger of the Lord. See note on Matt. i. 20. Many have supposed that a celestial messenger imparted the divine will to Philip. But most recent commentators concur in the opinion that no more is intended, than that the mind of Philip was powerfully impressed by the Spirit; and that he was thus convinced, beyond doubt, that he was called of God to a particular service. See notes on ver. 29, 39. ¶ *Toward the south.* That is, from Samaria, where Philip was left by the apostles. ¶ *Gaza.* One of the five principal cities of the Philistines, situated about sixty miles south-westerly from Jerusalem. Being one of the frontier defences against Egypt, it was an important place, and experienced many vicissitudes by the contests of different nations for its possession. Having been successively under the dominion of the Philistines, Jews, Chaldeans, Persians, and Egyptians, it was destroyed, B.C. 98, by Alexander Jannæus. A new town was afterwards built in its immediate vicinity, somewhat nearer the sea, which is still existing, and which contained, A.D. 1838, when it was visited by Robinson, about sixteen thousand inhabitants. ¶ *Which is desert.* This may apply either to Gaza, or to the way thither. If to the former, the reference must be to the old town, which had been in ruins nearly a century. But it seems more probable that the way is described as *desert*, because Philip was not required to go to Gaza, but only to the way or road leading thither from Jerusalem; and it seems probable that the Spirit would indicate the character or appearance of the place whither Philip was sent, rather than of a place to which he was not sent. And geographers tell us that one of the principal roads from Jerusalem to Gaza actually led through a desert or thinly-populated country. Desert

eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

or wilderness, among the Jews, did not necessarily mean a place entirely uninhabited. See note on Matt. iii. 1.

27. *Ethiopia.* In the Old Testament, this name is supposed to be applied to several different countries; one lying in Africa, one in Arabia, and one comprehending the regions of Persia, Chusistan, and Susiana. But "Ethiopia proper lay south of Egypt, on the Nile; and was bounded north by Egypt, that is, by the cataracts, near Syene; east by the Red Sea, and perhaps a part of the Indian Ocean; south by unknown regions of the interior of Africa; and west by Libya and deserts. It comprehended, of course, the modern countries of Nubia, or Sennaar, and Abyssinia. The chief city in it was the ancient Meroë, situated on the island or tract of the same name, between the Nile and Astaboras, not far from the modern Shendi."—*Robinson's Calmet.* ¶ *Eunuch.* See note on Matt. xix. 12. ¶ *Candace.* "The Ethiopian queen Candace, whose treasurer is mentioned, Acts viii. 27, was probably queen of Meroë, where a succession of females reigned, who all bore this name. (Pliny, Hist. Nat. vi. 29.) As this courtier is said to have gone up to Jerusalem to worship, he was probably a Jew by religion, if not by birth."—*Robinson's Calmet.* ¶ *Had the charge of all her treasures.* That is, he was her treasurer. His appointment to this important and responsible office indicates that he was a person of good character, and of high consideration. ¶ *Come to Jerusalem, &c.* It is perhaps impossible to determine with certainty whether this Ethiopian was a Jew by birth; but if he was not, he was evidently a proselyte to Judaism, since he visited Jerusalem for the express purpose of worshipping there; and when we first see the man distinctly, he was engaged in reading the Jewish prophet Isaiah. It was customary for the Jews and proselytes to assemble at Jerusalem, at the great feasts. It has been suggested with some reason, that at about this period a greater number so assembled, and from a longer distance than usual, on account of

28 Was returning; and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto

the general expectation that the Messiah was about to appear. See note on Matt. iii. 5. The same expectation may account for the eunuch's intense study of Isaiah, who had so particularly spoken of the Messiah, ver. 28.

28. *Was returning.* His visit at Jerusalem had been accomplished, and he was returning to his distant home. He had probably been in Jerusalem from the time of the last Passover, when Jesus was crucified: it would therefore seem impossible that he should be ignorant of the important and striking events which had there transpired; and some have expressed astonishment that he was not among the converts to Christianity. It should be observed, however, that nothing appears in this history indicating his ignorance of what had occurred. Philip gave him no history of events: he only pointed out their correspondence with the prediction of Isaiah. That he was not converted before he met Philip is no more marvellous than that Saul, who had witnessed the same events, was not converted until Jesus met him on his murderous pilgrimage to Damascus. ¶ *Chariot.* Wheel carriages were used at a very early date. Pharaoh had such, when he pursued the Israelites, Exod. xiv. 25; and three hundred years earlier, we find such carriages noticed in Egypt. Gen. xlv. 19. Of course, they differed much, in convenience and elegance, from *chariots* now in use. Vehicles, in the form of litters, borne on two poles, by men or horses, were also called by the same name; and it is not easy, at this day, to determine with certainty to which class of carriages this Ethiopian's chariot belonged. ¶ *Read Esaias, &c.* That is, the scroll on which his prophecy was written; probably the Greek version, called the Septuagint. Perhaps the events which had recently transpired at Jerusalem stimulated him to a more careful examination of this prophecy concerning the Messiah. And his examination was not in vain; for, though he could not fully comprehend the predictions without the direction of a guide, ver. 31, God sent him such a guide, and he

Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the

believed, was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing.

29. *The Spirit said.* The precise manner of communication we know not. See note on ver. 26. In some way, such a vivid impression was made on Philip's mind, that he had no doubt concerning his duty. The evident meaning of the historian is, that, in all this transaction, Philip acted under a miraculous impulse. ¶ *Join thyself, &c.* Or, attach thyself to this chariot; that is, go to it, accompany it, that the attention of the occupant may be attracted. Philip had gone into the desert place, by divine command, ver. 26, not knowing for what particular purpose, but willing to obey the word of the Lord without questioning the propriety of the duty required. He now receives an intimation that his mission has particular reference to the stranger in the chariot.

30. *And Philip ran, &c.* His *running* may indicate, as some suppose, the alacrity of his obedience; or, perhaps quite as probably, it may have been necessary for him to *run*, to overtake the carriage, before it should be beyond his reach. ¶ *Heard him read.* The eunuch was reading aloud, and Philip was thus enabled at once to perceive what subject engrossed his thoughts. ¶ *Understandest thou what thou readest?* This was truly an important question. The language of Paul, with variations, may well be applied to this subject: it is more profitable to read five words with the understanding, than ten thousand words which are not understood. See 1 Cor. xiv. 19. Yet it is to be feared that many are unconscious of the importance of understanding what they read. In reading the scriptures, some men regard the number of chapters read, more than the amount of spiritual knowledge acquired. They consider it a duty to read so many chapters in a day, or a week, or a year; and if they succeed in this, they account their duty performed, even though they gain no distinct idea, or wrong ideas only, from what they have read. Such reading is nearly labor in vain. It affords more actual

prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up, and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was

led as a sheep to the slaughter: and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

benefit to read and *understand* a single chapter of the New Testament, than to commit the whole Bible to memory, without understanding what it truly teaches. Let them who are accustomed to read continue to do so; and let them who have hitherto neglected this duty speedily commence its performance; but let them, at the same time, diligently endeavor to ascertain the true meaning of the sacred word. To this end, let them carefully consider the meaning of the language read, and when its sense is not perfectly obvious, compare it with what is written in other passages upon the same subject; compare scripture with scripture; use all proper helps within reach; and, with a mind open and ready to receive the truth whenever and wherever found, humbly crave the influences and teachings of the divine Spirit. He who will thus read and pray may reasonably expect to read with profit to his own soul; and though he may not be able fully to comprehend the height and depth of the divine wisdom, he can scarcely fail to comprehend so much as is essential to guide him in the performance of his duty, and to fill his heart with reverence and gratitude to God.

31. *How can I, &c.* This was a virtual acknowledgment that he did not understand. It should be observed, that he was reading a prophecy; he knew not that it had been fulfilled; and he could not perceive its interpretation. Prophetic writings are difficult to be understood, before they are fulfilled. But after their fulfilment, and especially after that fulfilment has been pointed out by inspired men, it is not so difficult to understand them. God has granted to us many privileges which even holy men of old time did not enjoy. Matt. xiii. 17. May he grant us grace to improve those privileges faithfully, to our advancement in spiritual knowledge and life. ¶ *Guide me.*

Namely, to a knowledge of the truth; or point out the true meaning of the prophet. ¶ *He desired, &c.* He thus manifested a willingness to be instructed. Presuming from the manner of Philip's address, that he understood the prophecy, the eunuch desired him to impart the necessary information, so that *he* also might understand.

32. *The place, &c.* The passage is quoted from Isa. liii. 7, 8, according to the Septuagint, slightly differing from the Hebrew; and it was probably from this Greek version that the eunuch was reading. ¶ *He was led as a sheep, &c.* This is a striking image of unresisting innocence inhumanly butchered; and most literally did the event correspond with the prediction. The pure and innocent Jesus was led away by wicked hands to the slaughter. He expostulated, to be sure, against the iniquitous proceedings, John xviii. 20—23; yet he offered no resistance, though he might have called angelic aid. Matt. xxvi. 53. He submitted patiently; like a lamb, he opened not his mouth to reproach; and, even with his dying breath, he invoked forgiveness upon his murderers.

33. *In his humiliation.* In his depressed state, when bound with cords, or clothed with kingly robes in mockery, and exposed to the derision of the multitude, buffeted, and subjected to the most contemptuous treatment. ¶ *His judgment, &c.* Justice or a just judgment was denied to him. All the forms of justice were outraged; and even then, his accusers failed to substantiate their charge. The judge openly and repeatedly declared that he was not proved guilty of any crime, John xix. 4, 6; yet a sentence of death was absolutely extorted from Pilate, John xix. 12—16. Truly, a just judgment was denied to him, or taken away from him. ¶ *Who shall declare his generation?* Various interpretations have been given of this phrase. By different commentators it has been

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth,

supposed to mean, Who will declare his manner of life? Who can explain the mystery of his divine generation, or his incarnation? Who can explain his generation of spiritual children?

Who shall declare the duration of his kingdom? &c. The interpretation given by Lightfoot, in which Pearce, Whitby, Barnes, Livermore, and others substantially agree, seems much more reasonable:—"That is, who shall declare the wickedness of that age, or generation, wherein he lived, and by whom he suffered such things? This and such like passages are very usual amongst the Jews. R. Levi saith, 'The Son of David shall not come, but in a generation wherein men's faces shall be impudent; and which will deserve to be cut off. R. Jannai saith, When thou seest the generation, after the slandering and blaspheming generation, then expect the feet of King Messiah,'—that is, his coming." The word *generation* "is to be understood of the age and generation in which Christ lived, rather than of his own generation or descent; and so it is used by the Holy Ghost in other places, as Gen. vi. 9; Acts xiii. 36, &c.; and so it is interpreted here by the Chaldee and other Jewish glossaries. Now, the meaning of the verse and of this clause is to this purpose:—He was taken away and hurried from prison, and from judgment to execution, and (as the LXX. hath enlarged the sense by change of phrase) in his poor and dejected estate, his judgment was utterly taken away, and no right done him; and who can sufficiently speak of the looseness and wickedness of that generation (called in the gospel the viperous, adulterous, wicked, untoward generation) which dealt so unjustly and wretchedly with him, as to take and cut him off from the land of the living?" ¶ *His life is taken*, &c. He was put to death. This was the great act of wickedness referred to, which rendered the criminality of that generation unspeakable or indescribable. They crucified their own Messiah, who came to save them from their sins; who labored for their

and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See,

benefit while living, and prayed for them when dying.

34. *Answered Philip*. Rather addressed him. A common Hebraism. ¶ *Of whom speaketh the prophet this?* The application of the language was what the eunuch did not understand; and he desired Philip to guide him. It may be observed, that the ancient Jews are said to have applied this prophecy to the Messiah; but afterwards, to evade its application to Jesus, the more modern referred it to Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or some one else. Perhaps the eunuch might have heard this question discussed at Jerusalem, but knew too little of the facts in the case to form a satisfactory judgment.

35. *At the same scripture*, &c. He explained the prophecy which had been read, and showed its exact fulfilment in Jesus; thus proving that the prophet spake not of himself, but of the Messiah, and that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah predicted. From what follows, ver. 36, he seems also to have urged the duty of an open profession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah, in the customary manner, by being baptized.

36. *Went on their way*. Continued their journey. ¶ *Certain water*. The phrase used does not indicate the quantity of water, whether a spring, brook, river, or lake. It is known, however, that in the region here described there are no large collections of water. A fountain is pointed out, between Jerusalem and Hebron, in the land of Judah, which tradition says is the "water" mentioned in the text, and which is called the Ethiopian fountain. But, like many other traditions, this must be received as of very doubtful authority. It is of little comparative importance to us where the transaction occurred: the fact only concerns us. ¶ *What doth hinder me*, &c. Hence it appears that Philip had instructed him concerning the duty of sealing his change of faith, by baptism; unless we suppose he was already so well acquainted with the Jewish custom, and with the adoption of the same rite by the Christians at Jerusalem, as to render any special in-

here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went

struction unnecessary; which, indeed, is by no means improbable.

37. *If thou believest with all thine heart.* If thou believest with undoubting confidence. Belief is an act of the mind. But the Hebrews speak of believing with the heart, of loving with the mind, and the like. Matt. xxii. 37; Rom. x. 10. By such expressions, it is thought some peculiarity of meaning is conveyed: to love with the mind may mean the exercise of love founded on an accurate perception of the character of the person loved; and to believe with the heart may indicate a belief which affects the heart, begetting a purpose or resolution to act in accordance with such belief. ¶ *That Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* Or, that Jesus, the Christ, is the Son of God; or, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. The phrase will admit either translation. The latter form seems preferable; because "it was not necessary to prove to any Jew, that Christ was the Son of God (they all believing it); but it was found necessary to prove to them that Jesus was the Christ, and therefore the Son of God."—*Pearce*. This was what Philip had preached; that the prophetic description of the Messiah found its object in Jesus; in other words, that he was the true Messiah. The Ethiopian doubtless believed, in common with the Jews, that the Messiah was the Son of God: when convinced, therefore, of the Messiahship of Jesus, he of course admitted his Sonship. The simplicity of this confession of faith is worthy of notice. The eunuch believed that Jesus was the true Messiah, the Son of God; and, on his profession of this belief, Philip received him as a member of the Christian church. He did not require an assent to a complicated or unintelligible creed; but was willing to receive, as a Christian, a good man who heartily believed in the Messiahship and divine

down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Sonship of Jesus. This whole verse is wanting in many ancient MSS., and is omitted as spurious by Griesbach, and marked as doubtful by Knapp.

38. *Went down both into the water.* Or, *to the water*. Concerning the manner in which baptism was administered by the early Christians, and the significance of that rite, see note on Matt. iii. 6.

39. *Out of the water.* "From the water" would be an equally accurate translation. It cannot be *proved* by the use of the prepositions in this and the preceding verse, whether the baptism was administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersing; for they may properly enough be translated *into* and *out of*, or *to* and *from*; and they are very often used in each of these senses. ¶ *Spirit of the Lord.* See note on ver. 29. ¶ *Caught away.* Some commentators imagine that Philip was taken up bodily from the earth by the Spirit. "Probably he transported him part of the way through the air."—*Doddridge*. A more reasonable and probable interpretation is, that Philip was separated from the eunuch, as he had formerly been caused to meet him, by a powerful or irresistible impulse of the Spirit. The only miracle necessary in the case was to produce this impression and consciousness of the divine will upon the mind of Philip. Had he consulted his own choice only, he might have remained longer with the Ethiopian, to enjoy his society and give him further instructions. But he was made to feel that his duty called him elsewhere, and he obeyed the divine direction; tearing himself away, so to speak, from his agreeable and interesting companion. ¶ *He went, &c.* That is, the eunuch proceeded on his journey with a joyful heart. He rejoiced in the belief that the long-expected Messiah had appeared, and joyfully anticipated the blessings of his reign. There is a tra-

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea.

dition that this Ethiopian preached the gospel to his countrymen, and afterwards suffered martyrdom. But it is generally agreed, that no church was established in that region, until about A.D. 330. Lightfoot has a characteristic remark, with reference to this tradition: "This I observe to be the constant and common officiousness of superstition, — to make any man, that is mentioned in the New Testament with a good report, to become a preacher, and commonly a bishop, and constantly a martyr."

40. *Was found*, &c. His next public appearance was in Azotus: his journey thither was performed privately. ¶ *Azotus*. The Hebrew Ashdod, "one of the five cities of the Philistines, assigned to the tribe of Judah, but never conquered by them, Josh. xiii. 8; xv. 46, 47; 1 Sam. v. 1; vi. 17, &c. It was called by the Greeks Azotus. Here stood the temple of Dagon; and hither the ark was first brought, after the fatal battle of Ebenezer, 1 Sam. v. 1, seq. It sustained many sieges; for instance, by Tartan, the Assyrian general, in the time of Hezekiah, Isa. xx. 1; afterwards by Psammeticus, King of Egypt, contemporary with Manassch, Amon, and Josiah. This siege is said by Herodotus (ii. 157) to have lasted twenty-nine years! It was afterwards taken by the Maccabees, and destroyed by Jonathan, 1 Macc. v. 16; x. 77, seq.; but was again restored by the Roman general Gabinius. Jos. Ant. B. xiv. ch. 5, § 3. At the present day, it is a miserable village, still called *Esdud*."—*Robinson*. ¶ *All the cities*. Between Azotus and Cesarea, on the coast of the Mediterranean, were situated Joppa, Lydda, Ekron, Jannia, and other cities or villages. ¶ *Cesarea*. This place, formerly called Strato's Tower, is to be distinguished from Cesarea Philippi. It is situated on the Mediterranean, about sixty miles north-westerly from Jerusalem. It was magnificently adorned by Herod the Great, and named Cesarea, in honor of Augustus Cæsar. It was the residence of the Roman governor of the province of Judea. Cornelius the centurion, who

## CHAPTER IX.

AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter

was baptized by Peter, resided here, Acts x. Here also the prophet Agabus foretold to the apostle Paul, that he would be bound at Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 10, 11. And here was Paul imprisoned two years till he could be conveniently conducted to Rome, having appealed to Nero. It is now entirely desolate. This place seems to have been the stated residence of Philip; and he may have turned his steps thither from Azotus, on account of his family. See Acts xxi. 8, 9.

## CHAPTER IX.

Hitherto, the history has respect to the proceedings of the Twelve, immediately after the death and resurrection of their Master. They witnessed a good confession in Jerusalem; and in spite of persecution, imprisonment, and stripes, they testified boldly that the same Jesus whom the Jews had crucified was the true Messiah; and thousands believed and were baptized. They appointed seven deacons, to assist in the temporal affairs of the church; two of whom also preached the word, and one sealed his testimony with his blood. The scene of the history now changes, and new characters are presented. The Gentiles are to be made partakers of the gospel in common with the Jews; and the circumstances connected with this great and glorious work are recorded with considerable minuteness. As Paul was the chief apostle to the Gentiles, the remainder of the history, with the exception of two or three chapters, is almost exclusively devoted to his labors. He was specially selected and commissioned for this great work, Acts xxvi. 15—18: hence his conversion is particularly described.

1. *And Saul*. See Acts vii. 58; viii. 1, 3. Saul was a Jew, born in Tarsus, educated by Gamaliel, and thoroughly instructed in the law; moreover he was full of burning zeal, and one of the most active and energetic persecutors of the Christian church in its infancy. Acts xxii. 3—5. That he possessed extraordinary natural abilities, is man-



against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might

ifest from his writings; and that he devoted himself to the work of the ministry with untiring patience and unconquerable resolution, this history abundantly proves. ¶ *Yet breathing out threatenings, &c.* His persecuting rage had not cooled. Having succeeded in scattering the believers from Jerusalem, he was not satisfied; but, being exceedingly mad against them, he pursued them even to strange cities. Acts xxvi. 11. The phraseology is strong, as if he was absolutely on fire with rage, and breathed forth scorching and consuming flames. Some he threatened, that they might be induced to blaspheme; and some he procured to be destroyed, because they held fast their integrity. Acts xxvi. 10, 11. ¶ *Went unto the high priest.* All orders of the Sanhedrim, and all commissions issued by that tribunal, would very naturally bear the signature of the high priest, who was the presiding officer. See ver. 14, and ch. xxii. 5. These events are supposed to have occurred about a year after the crucifixion; at which time, it is said, one Theophilus was high priest.

2. *Desired of him letters.* He did not wait for orders, but sought for them; he craved authority to act in the name of the Sanhedrim against Christians. He was truly a volunteer in the war of extermination. ¶ *Damascus.* This city, now called Damash, or Demesch, was the capital of a kingdom of the same name, in Syria. "It was a city in the time of Abraham; and some of the ancients say that this patriarch reigned there immediately after Damascus, its founder." It is situated in the midst of a very fertile plain; and the scenery by which it is surrounded is so very beautiful, that some of the Orientals style it the Paradise of the East. It "was a metropolitan see under the patriarch of Antioch; at present the Greek patriarch of Antioch resides there." As is usual in cities where remarkable events occurred, many places are regarded with superstitious veneration. Thus a building is pointed out, as the very house in which Paul

bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined around about him a light from heaven:

lodged after his conversion; and in it a small closet where he passed three days of blindness without food; also a fountain from which water was taken for his baptism, and a window or port-hole in the wall through which he escaped from his persecutors, being let down in a basket. See Robinson's Calmet. ¶ *To the synagogues.* There were synagogues of Jews in Damascus; and to them were the letters directed, conjuring them, doubtless, to render efficient aid to Saul in extirpating all who professed faith in Jesus, or at least in securing them for trial at Jerusalem. The Sanhedrim could exercise no authority at Damascus, except over Jews; but over them their influence seems to have been as powerful, wherever they were scattered, as that of the Pope, in more modern times, over the devotees of the Romish church. The number of Jews in Damascus was very great. Josephus, in his history of the Jewish Wars, B. II. ch. xx. § 2, says that ten thousand of them were slaughtered in a single hour, during the reign of Nero. By whom the gospel had been preached there, does not appear; probably, however, by some of those who were dispersed from Jerusalem by the persecution. ¶ *Of this way.* Or, as we should say, of this class or sect; that is, Christians. ¶ *Men or women.* No sex should be spared. ¶ *Bring them bound.* That is, for trial; the result of which might be anticipated, as the judgment would probably precede the examination.

3. *Near Damascus.* The precise spot where the event occurred, which is here narrated, is professedly pointed out by the inhabitants of Damascus. "The ancient road from Jerusalem near Damascus lies between two mountains, not above a hundred paces distant from each other; both are round at bottom, and terminate in a point. That nearest the great road is called *Cocab, the star*, in memory of the dazzling light which here appeared to Paul. The other mountain is called, *Medawer el Cocab, the circle of light*. Towards the mid

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am

Jesus whom thou persecutest. *It is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling, and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord

dle of this mountain is an old monastery, almost destroyed, of which only one grotto remains, and this so small that a man can hardly turn himself in it. This is reported to have been Paul's shelter after his conversion, till he could make ready for continuing his journey to Damascus."—*Calmet*. ¶ *Suddenly there shined*, &c. The suddenness of the illumination has induced some to consider it the effect of common lighting. But the account given by Paul himself, Acts xxii. 6; xxvi. 13, is wholly inconsistent with such a supposition. It is manifestly represented as a miraculous light *from heaven*, or from above; perhaps similar in character with that which shone around the shepherds in Judea, at the Saviour's birth. Luke ii. 9.

4. *Fell to the earth*. Awed and overpowered with what he regarded as a manifestation of the divine glory, he sunk down upon the ground. See Dan. x. 8. ¶ *Heard a voice*. The sound of this voice was heard by Saul's companions, though they seem not to have understood its import. See note on ver. 7. But he understood it as directly addressed to himself. ¶ *Saul, Saul*. The repetition of the name imparts energy to the address, and betokens the speaker's earnestness. ¶ *Why*. For what reason; on account of what provocation or circumstance. This is the emphatic word in the sentence. The persecutor was requested to consider *why* he was engaged in such an unholy work. ¶ *Persecutest thou me*. There is no evidence that Saul was among the persecutors of Jesus, personally; though it is not unlikely that he was, for he was among the foremost zealots very soon after the crucifixion. But the probable meaning is, that he virtually persecuted Jesus, by persecuting his disciples; for whatever was done to them, our Lord regarded as done to himself. See Matt. x. 40; xxv. 40, 45.

5. *Who art thou, Lord?* As Saul was yet ignorant of the character of the speaker, the word *Lord* must be

understood as a respectful salutation, equivalent to our *Sir*, as the same word is translated, John iv. 19. Or, which seems quite as probable, we may suppose he was convinced by the extraordinary light, that he was in the presence of some superhuman being, and used the word, not merely as a term of respect, but as an acknowledgment of his own inferiority. ¶ *I am Jesus*. There seems no room to doubt, that our Lord personally held this conversation with Paul; but whether his *form* became distinctly visible, we are not told. Paul professes to have seen Jesus after his resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 8; but, when relating the circumstances attending his conversion, Acts xxii., xxvi., he does not speak of having *then* seen him. Moreover, had he seen the bodily form of Jesus, at the time when the light first appeared, he would scarcely have inquired, *Who art thou?* for, being a disciple of Gamaliel, and an active zealot for the law, it is altogether probable he had seen Jesus in the synagogues or temple, or before the Sanhedrim. Yet there are expressions in this account, and in references to it, which elsewhere occur, apparently indicating that, at some period during the transaction, perhaps at the moment when our Lord announced himself, he became visible to Saul. At the least, he made Saul sensible of his presence, and expostulated with him concerning the ungodly course he was pursuing. ¶ *It is hard*, &c. A proverbial expression, importing the folly of resistance, when it is not only useless, but attended by absolute and increased pain. The figure is taken from the kicking of an ox against the sharp-pointed staff, called a prick or a goad, with which he is driven. The proverb was common among the Greeks; examples of which are found in Euripides, Pindar, Æschylus, &c.

6. *Trembling, and astonished*. He was amazed by the miraculous light and voice, and filled with alarm by a conviction of his own wickedness. He instantly perceived that Jesus had truly

*said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

risen from the dead; and therefore that, in opposing the gospel, he opposed the truth. He perceived also, that the same Jesus was glorified; and that, in opposing him, he opposed one vastly superior to himself. Such opposition he felt to be sinful. ¶ *What wilt thou have me to do?* His rebellious heart was instantaneously subdued by the mild voice of Jesus. As soon as the truth was impressed on his mind, and the mercy of Jesus felt in his heart, he surrendered himself unreservedly. No longer regarding the authority of the Sanhedrim, he submitted himself to a higher power, and sought to know what was required of him by that power. This conversion was not only one of the most sudden, but also one of the most strongly marked, which was ever known. A principal ringleader of the persecutors, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against Christians, on his way to Damascus with authority and a determinate purpose to make further havoc of the church, became at once a submissive subject of Him whom he had persecuted, and thenceforth served him with faithfulness and abundant success. This conversion was attended by miracles, though the effect on the mind and heart may have been natural. We may not expect to witness similar miracles now. Conversions are more gradually wrought. But two important facts, confirmed by this conversion, should not be overlooked: (1.) When God chooses to convert a sinner, he is abundantly able to do it. The case of Saul was certainly unpromising. He was full of wrath and bitterness. It would not have been safe for a Christian to approach him, even on an errand of mercy. See ver. 13, 14. Yet Jesus speaks to him, and the work is accomplished. The strong man becomes as a little child. The hardened and obdurate persecutor becomes a meek and submissive subject. Just as easily can God convert any other sinner, however hardened in iniquity, whenever he chooses; for his people shall be made willing, in the day when his power is manifested, according to his word, Ps. cx. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. (2.) When God chooses to con-

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

vert a sinner, he can do it as speedily as the case may require. In human view, when Saul was so near Damascus, with full purpose to imprison and to destroy, it might have seemed impossible that he should be converted in season to prevent all violence. Yet the work was accomplished, before he arose from the earth upon which he was prostrated by the divine power. What has been done can be done. And it is idle to imagine that God cannot convert any and all sinners, soon enough to prevent any harm which a longer continuance in sin might involve. With men, such things may be impossible; but with God, all things are possible. Matt. xix. 26. God has declared his will, that all men shall be saved: let us not question his power to accomplish his will, nor limit the manner or period of its accomplishment. He best knows both *how* and *when* to convert sinners: let us, then, faithfully perform our own duty, and trust in him for the general result, without fear or doubting. ¶ *Go into the city.* That is, Damascus. ¶ *It shall be told thee.* The great work was accomplished. The heart was converted. The mind was convinced of the great fact in Christianity on which the whole fabric rests. The remainder he was to learn by more ordinary methods. His duty should be made known in due time, by chosen servants of God;—of course, not excluding those suggestions of the Spirit which instructed and guided all the apostles, of which he enjoyed his full share.

7. *Stood speechless.* They fell to the earth with Saul, Acts xxvi. 14. But they seem afterwards to have risen, and beheld the scene in silent wonder. Amazement, almost to the extent of stupefaction, sealed their lips. ¶ *Hearing a voice.* Paul says, "they heard not the voice," Acts xxii. 9. This apparent contradiction is easily reconciled, by supposing that they heard the sound of the voice, but did not distinguish the words; and in this sense it is perfectly allowable to understand the two declarations. ¶ *Seeing no man.* This would seem to indicate that Saul did see the form of a man, namely, the glorified form of Jesus. And the same

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

inference might be drawn from the language of Ananias, ver. 17. See note on ver. 5.

8. *When his eyes were opened, he saw no man.* He very naturally closed his eyes, to shut out the intensity of that light which shone from heaven; and when he opened them, he found that the sense of sight was gone. "There is no reason to suppose that there was any miracle in this blindness; for, in ch. xxii. 11, it is expressly said to have been caused by the intense light. 'And when I could not see, for the glory of that light,' &c. The intense sudden light had so affected the optic nerve of the eye as to cause a temporary blindness. This effect is not uncommon."—*Barnes*. The same effect may be noticed, by fixing the eyes steadily on the sun at noon-day. On withdrawing them, a sensation of darkness is perceived; and utter blindness has sometimes resulted. If Saul perceived the form of Jesus at this time, either he saw it simultaneously with the light, before his sight was overpowered, or he discerned with his mind only; in other words, the appearance was impressed on his mind, as in a vision. The latter supposition is the more probable; because, if he distinctly saw the person of Jesus at the first, he would scarcely have inquired, Who art thou? as he had probably seen him before his crucifixion. ¶ *They led him, &c.* Perhaps the companions of Saul did not behold the full glory of the light; or their eyes may have been less sensitive. They beheld enough to fill them with speechless wonder, but not enough to destroy their sight.

9. *Three days.* That is, according to the Jewish reckoning, taking a part of the day for the whole. He became blind about noon. Acts xxii. 6; xxvi. 13. If he remained blind through the next day, and recovered his sight on the following morning, the Jews would account it a period of three days. See

10 ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in

note on Matt. xxvii. 64. ¶ *Neither did eat nor drink.* We need not understand this as a religious fast. The shock he had received in body, and the intense agitation of his mind, would be sufficient to destroy his appetite, and render nourishment even disagreeable.

10. *A certain disciple.* That is, a Christian. Some have supposed him to have been one of the seventy disciples. Luke x. 1. But of this there is no satisfactory evidence. ¶ *Ananias.* Nothing is certainly known of this person, except what is here recorded. Like his namesake, Acts v. 1—5, he is mentioned only in connection with a single event; but, unlike him, his name is honored, on account of his instrumentality in a glorious and important blessing to the church. ¶ *In a vision.* Whether sleeping or waking, it does not appear. But the impression in either case was vivid and effectual. See note on Matt. xvii. 9. ¶ *Behold, I am here, Lord.* This expression denotes a perfect willingness to hear and obey the divine will, and it indicates, moreover, that Ananias was not unaccustomed to such celestial visitations; for it manifests no surprise, alarm, or trepidation. Almost invariably in the scriptures, men are represented as terrified on the first occasion of being conscious of the presence of a superhuman visitant.

11 *The street which is called Straight.* The traveller Carne says, "The street still called Straight, and where St. Paul is with reason said to have lived, is entered by the road from Jerusalem. It is as straight as an arrow, a mile in length, broad and well paved." Maundrell also speaks of the same street, but calls it about half a mile long. ¶ *Judas.* Nothing further is known of this person. ¶ *Saul.* This was the Hebrew name by which Paul was denominated, before his conversion. See note on Acts vii. 58. He is supposed by some to have taken the Roman name Paul, in honor of Sergius Paulus, an

the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem :

officer of the government, who seems to have been converted under his ministry. See Acts xiii. 7—9. Whether or not changed for this cause, it is certain that the change of name, in the history, dates from that period. ¶ *Of Tarsus*. Thus styled, because Tarsus was his birth-place. See note on Acts xxii. 3. ¶ *He prayeth*. Ananias regarded Saul as a foe to Christianity, and considered it dangerous to approach him, ver. 13, 14. The assurance, "Behold he prayeth," was designed to remove his apprehensions, by indicating the change in Saul's feelings and purposes. The dreaded persecutor had become a humble disciple. Instead of threatenings and slaughter, he began to breathe out prayers. Doubtless, he had prayed before, as a Pharisee, trusting in his own righteousness. But now he prayed as a meek disciple of Jesus, trusting in the divine mercy and grace. It was no longer dangerous, therefore, to approach him with a gospel message.

12. *In a vision*, &c. See note on ver. 10. The appearance, of course, was presented to the mind of Saul, and not to his organs of sight, for he was blind; but he received a distinct idea of the person and name of Ananias, and the purpose for which the visit should be made. He was therefore prepared to receive him without hesitation.

13. *Answered*, &c. The train of thoughts which naturally passed through the mind of Ananias, on being commanded to visit such a notorious persecutor, is fitly represented as an answer. The vision, ver. 10, had not ended; and what follows to ver. 16, is to be considered as belonging to it. ¶ *Heard by many*. Perhaps those who had escaped the *havoc* at Jerusalem, and fled to Damascus. The name of Saul was terrible to all Christians; for

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

they considered him their most bitter and active persecutor. ¶ *Saints*. Disciples; so called, because they had forsaken some of their evil ways, and were now under the influence of a purifying doctrine. Some suppose, with less probability, that the term is used in that general sense in which it was applied by the Jews to the members of their own communion, indicating a *consecrated* class of men, but not necessarily implying individual purity.

14. *He hath authority*, &c. Ananias feared to trust himself in the hands of a persecutor, who could claim legitimate authority to apprehend victims for slaughter. The object of Saul's journey, and the authority under which he acted, had become known at Damascus before he arrived. Notice may have been sent from Jerusalem by the apostles or other disciples, to guard their brethren at Damascus against the formidable adversary who breathed out threatenings and slaughter.

15. *Go thy way*. That is, obey the command, already given, to inquire at the house of Judas, for Saul of Tarsus. Though men should, without hesitation, obey all requirements which they believe are of divine authority, yet in this case, a reason was graciously given, to encourage the obedience of Ananias. ¶ *Chosen vessel*. A figurative expression, denoting that the person was selected as a special agent for communicating favors from God to men. ¶ *To bear my name*. The figure of a vessel is continued, as if a blessing was conveyed in it from place to place. The meaning is, that Saul was appointed as an agent to communicate a knowledge of God to the Gentiles. ¶ *Gentiles*. All who were not Jews were styled Gentiles; and to them most emphatically was Paul an apostle. Gal. ii. 7, 8.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house: and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord (*even Jesus* that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell

¶ *Kings.* He gave a noble testimony to the truth, before king Agrippa, Acts ch. xxvi. Having appealed to Cæsar against the judgment of the Jewish and provincial rulers, he is said to have testified the grace of God at Rome in presence of the emperor; and to this he is supposed to refer, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. ¶ *Children of Israel.* The Jews; last named, perhaps, because less labor was to be bestowed on them than on the Gentiles by this new apostle.

16. *For I will show him, &c.* Saul was appointed, not only to labor, but to suffer reproach and persecution, in the cause of Christianity. Some suppose that this was to be revealed to him at once, by vision or by the ministry of Ananias. Or the language may be understood thus:—I will make him realize his duty to endure all the afflictions which shall befall him in his ministry; in every trial, he shall feel that necessity is laid upon him, and that he *must*, as a faithful servant, endure to the utmost all the opposition and persecution of his adversaries. Such a spirit seemed ever afterwards to animate this apostle. He did not always distinctly foresee the exact amount of suffering in store for him; but he was prepared to meet it cheerfully and with fortitude, even to the loss of life. See Acts xx. 22—24.

17. *Putting his hands.* A customary act of the Jews, when communicating or invoking blessings. See note on Acts viii. 17. This is not to be regarded as an ordination of Saul by Ananias; his calling as an apostle was directly from the Lord; and the other apostles did not ordain him to the apostleship, until fourteen years after his conversion. See Gal. i. 15—19; ii. 1—9. He and Barnabas were set apart to the ministry, though not to the apostleship, at an earlier period, Acts xiii. 1—3. ¶ *Brother Saul.* Ananias at once recognized him as a brother in

from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached

faith, a fellow-believer in Christ. ¶ *The Lord, even Jesus.* Rather, *the Lord Jesus.* ¶ *That appeared, &c.* See ver. 3—6. ¶ *Receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* See notes on Acts i. 5; ii. 4. This interview with Ananias is more fully described, Acts xxii. 12—16.

18. *As it had been scales.* The obstruction to his sight was instantaneously removed, as if scales had fallen from his eyes. It is not said that scales literally fell, but that the effect was as if they fell. The blindness of Saul may be regarded as a natural effect of the miraculous light which overpowered his vision. The restoration of sight instantaneously, and at the word of Ananias, must be considered altogether miraculous. ¶ *Was baptized.* The duty of immediate baptism, as a seal of his open profession of Christianity, was suggested by Ananias. Acts xxii. 16. This rite was administered to all who entered the church.

19. *Received meat.* Since he was arrested in his mad career, three days previously, he had taken no food, ver. 9. *Meat* is put for any kind of food. See Gen. i. 29, 30; ix. 3; Matt. iii. 4. ¶ *Was strengthened.* Abstinence from food, and extreme mental agitation, had exhausted his physical strength; it was now restored by the ordinary means. ¶ *Certain days.* The precise duration of time is not here mentioned. It is evident from Gal. i. 15—18, that between his baptism, ver. 18, and his journey to Jerusalem, ver. 26, three years elapsed; during which time he visited Arabia. Some place this journey to Arabia between the first and last clause of this verse. But ver. 21 cannot easily be explained, consistently with this supposition. Others, with more probability, take in the visit to Arabia between ver. 22 and 23. See note on ver. 23.

20. Saul “was not disobedient to the

Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and

came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus,

heavenly vision," Acts xxvi. 19; but immediately entered upon his ministry, and exerted his utmost powers to establish the cause which he had been laboring to destroy. ¶ *Christ*. On the authority of many ancient manuscripts, Griesbach and Knapp read *Jesus*, instead of *Christ*. This reading seems more natural than the received text, because, among the Jews, it was universally admitted that the Christ, or the Messiah, was the Son of God; and, of course, there was no need of argument to convince them of that fact. But that Jesus was that Messiah, or Christ, and consequently the Son of God, they denied: this therefore was the fact to be proved, and to its proof Saul addressed himself. ¶ *In the synagogues*. The Jews had several synagogues in Damascus, where they assembled for public worship. It was customary to permit any one to speak in the synagogue on religious subjects, and not, as now, to have the whole service of prayer, preaching, and exhortation, performed by the minister. See Acts xiii. 15, and note on Luke iv. 16. A favorable opportunity was thus afforded to Saul, which he gladly embraced, to prove to the Jews that their long-expected Messiah had appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; who, though once crucified, had risen from the dead and ascended to glory. Of this fact he had the strongest evidence; for he had personally conversed with his ascended Lord, and had witnessed an overpowering display of his glory. He could therefore, like the original apostles, speak of what he had *seen*, and testify concerning that which he knew.

21. *Amazed*. His hearers were utterly astonished at the change in Saul's conduct. They could not comprehend how a man who had so recently been a flaming persecutor of Christians should so soon become their associate and zealous advocate; how a man who visited Damascus for the express purpose of destroying Christians should engage with his whole soul in the effort

to increase their number, and promote the cause in which they were engaged. Their astonishment was perfectly natural, if Saul commenced preaching to them immediately after his conversion. But if three years had elapsed, as some suppose, and he had, in the mean time, been preaching in Arabia, they could scarcely have been so much astonished to hear him preach Jesus as the Son of God, on his return to Damascus. See note on ver. 19. ¶ *Destroyed*. Formerly he "made havoc of the church;" and, when Christians were put to death, he gave his voice against them. Acts viii. 3; xxvi. 10. ¶ *For that intent*. For that purpose; with that intention; namely, to continue the work of devastation and destruction in which he had been engaged at Jerusalem, and to apprehend new victims to be sent bound to the chief priests.

22. *Increased the more in strength*. Spiritual energy or moral strength is probably intended. Doubtless, by the exercise of his own intellectual powers, as well as by the influences of the Holy Spirit, his conceptions of the truth became more clear and comprehensive, and he became able to communicate it with more irresistible power. ¶ *Confounded*. Or perplexed, or confuted. He effectually silenced the objections urged by the Jews; and, by arguments which they could neither gainsay nor resist, *proved* that *this* Jesus, the same Jesus whom their countrymen had rejected and crucified, was the *very* Christ, or Messiah, predicted by their own prophets. The same word is translated "confused," Acts xix. 32, and freely rendered, rather than translated, "in an uproar," Acts xxi. 31. It seems therefore to indicate a degree of vexation on the part of those who are confuted or silenced. And, indeed, this is not an unusual attendant on discomfiture in argument. Frequent instances are recorded in the Gospels, of consultations among the Jews to destroy the life of Jesus, immediately after he had put them to si-

proving that this is very Christ.

23 ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.

24 But their laying wait was

lence in argument, or caused them, as he often did, to condemn themselves out of their own mouths.

23. *After that many days were fulfilled.* How many, is not here stated; though the form of expression denotes a period of considerable length. And in this interval of time, it is generally supposed, is to be placed the journey to Arabia. Gal. i. 17. Luke omits this journey; but he says nothing contradictory to Paul's statement: on the contrary, he indicates a space of time sufficient for it, during which he relates no act performed by him. The two accounts together compose a better connected narrative than either alone; and therefore they may be said to corroborate each other. At the same time, it is perfectly manifest that neither was written with reference to the other, or with a purpose of collusion. The length of time spent in Arabia, or the manner in which the "three years" were divided between Arabia and Damascus, "is not determinable; nor indeed is it material to inquire, since we have the whole time of all his abodes summed up in that account of three years. Now, whereas there is no mention in Luke's relation of his journey into Arabia, but he maketh him (as one would think) to come up to Jerusalem, at his first departure from Damascus,—we have showed elsewhere that it is no uncouth thing with this and the other evangelists, to make such brief transitions in stories of a large distance; and Paul himself plainly sheweth us in the place alleged, how to make the brief story of Luke full and complete, and to speak it out; namely, that Paul, upon his coming after his conversion into Damascus, began there to preach, and increased more and more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, &c. And, having preached awhile in Damascus, he went into Arabia, which country was now under the same government with Damascus, namely, under King Aretas; and, after awhile, he returned into Damascus again. And then do the Jews there seek to kill him; and they incense the

known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

governor of the city under Aretas against him, so that he setteth a watch to take him; but he escapeth over the wall, by night, in a basket, Acts ix. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 33. We shall see, by and by, that there were preparations for war this year betwixt Aretas the king of Arabia, and Herod the tetrarch; and it is not improbable that the Jews, in those times of commotion, did accuse Paul to the governor of Damascus under Aretas, for a spy, or for a man that was an enemy to the king's cause; and so they interest the governor in a quarrel against him."—*Lightfoot*. ¶ *Took counsel to kill him.* They formed a plan to kill him, which is more particularly described in the succeeding verse. They were enraged at his success in proselyting so many to a belief in Jesus. They were foiled in argument, and could not withstand the energy of his reasoning and exhortation. Like their brethren in Jerusalem, they resolved to silence him by destroying his life, as they saw no other method to counteract his influence.

24. *Laying wait.* They seem to have posted men at the several gates, to slay him, if he should attempt to leave the city. Damascus, like other ancient cities, was surrounded by a high wall; and there was neither ingress or egress except through the gates. That men were placed at these gates with a murderous design, became known to Saul, by information of his friends, or otherwise; and he refrained from a voluntary exposure of his life.

25. So violent was the fury of the Jews against Saul, that he could not safely appear in public, and consequently was unable to pursue his labor with any reasonable prospect of success. Not having access to the people, he could not expect to make many converts. His life was in constant hazard; and it seemed expedient both to himself and his friends that he should retire for a season, until the violence of the persecution against him should abate. This was strictly in accordance with the direction given by our Lord to his disciples, Matt. x. 23. No man



26 ¶ And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took him, and

brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

is bound to sacrifice his life unnecessarily, or when there is no reasonable hope of benefiting others thereby; or to persist in exertions to confer spiritual benefits on men who manifest a settled purpose that they will not receive them. To this our Lord seems to allude, when he says, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine; lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Matt. vii. 6. ¶ *By the wall.* That is, by the side of the wall, or from an aperture in the wall. In many ancient cities, the outermost houses were built against the wall, so that one might step from the top of the house to the top of the wall. In some cases, it would seem there was an aperture from the inside of the house entirely through the wall, serving for a window, and perhaps for other purposes. Probably some friend of Saul resided in such a house, and afforded him the means of escape. ¶ *In a basket.* Being placed in a basket, he was lowered down to the ground by the help of cords, and thus avoided meeting those who were watching for his life. To this escape from his enemies he refers in 2 Cor. xi. 33, saying, he escaped "through a window" in the wall.

26. *When Saul was come to Jerusalem.* He probably went directly thither from Damascus. This was three years after his conversion. See Gal. i. 17, 18. ¶ *He assayed.* He attempted, or endeavored. ¶ *To join himself to the disciples.* To associate with them, as a Christian brother. ¶ *They were all afraid of him, &c.* They well remembered his former opposition to the church, and the violent measures he pursued for the imprisonment and destruction of believers. They were fearful he was not honest in his profession of discipleship, and that his real object was to betray all confidence which might be reposed in him, and to destroy those whom he affected to regard as brethren. A difficulty has been suggested concerning this account, which is fairly stated by Lightfoot, and an-

swered perhaps as satisfactorily by him as by any other. "This very thing hath caused some to conceive that Paul had a journey to Jerusalem a little after his conversion, and before ever he went into Arabia; because they cannot conceive how it should be possible that he should have been a convert and a preacher of the gospel three years together, and yet his conversion and his present qualities should be unknown to the church at Jerusalem; and the rather, because he himself saith, that the wonder of his conversion 'was not done in a corner.' Acts xxvi. 26. But these two or three considerations may help to resolve the scruple. (1.) The distance between Damascus and Jerusalem, which was exceeding great. (2.) The quarrels between Herod and Aretas, which were a means to hinder intercourse betwixt those two places. (3.) The persecution that continued still upon the church of Judea, which would keep the disciples of Damascus from going thither. And (4.) The just fear that might possess the disciples at Jerusalem, in the very time of persecution; for, though it was said before, the church at Jerusalem and of Judea enjoyed a great deal of rest and tranquility after the conversion of Paul, their great persecutor, in comparison of what they had done before, yet was not the persecution of the church utterly extinct to the very time of Paul's coming up to Jerusalem, but continued still; and, therefore, it is the less wonderful if the disciples there be the more fearful and cautious."

27. *Barnabas took him.* See Acts iv. 36. When, or in what manner, Barnabas became acquainted with Saul, and with the faithfulness and success of his ministry, does not appear. It has been suggested that, as Cyprus, the native place of Barnabas, was not far from Tarsus, they may have been acquainted in youth, and that they had on that account a more strong mutual confidence. ¶ *Brought him to the apostles.* That is, to Peter and James; for he saw none of the other apostles, on this

28 And he was with them coming in and going out of Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 Which when the brethren

visit at Jerusalem. See Gal. i. 18, 19. ¶ *In the way.* Namely, the way or road to Damascus.

28. *Was with them, coming in and going out.* An expression denoting that he dwelt with the apostles on terms of social intimacy. He remained at Jerusalem fifteen days. Gal. i. 18.

29. *Spake boldly.* With freedom as well as with confidence. See note on Acts iv. 13. ¶ *In the name of the Lord Jesus.* Like the other apostles, the great point which he urged was the Messiahship of Jesus, as demonstrated by his resurrection and ascension. Rom. i. 4. This name, which had been a term of reproach and a signal for persecution, is now represented as more honorable than any other, and the only name, under God, in which men may confide with safety. We cannot doubt that Saul preached this name with earnestness, and energetically enforced the doctrines of Jesus, if we are governed in our judgment by the character of his epistles. ¶ *Disputed.* This word is not here to be understood in its bad sense, as importing an angry contention; but as indicating an argument, forcibly urged, doubtless, but in a friendly spirit, on the part of Saul. See note on Acts vi. 9. The same word is rendered "questioned," Mark i. 27; ix. 10; "reasoning," Mark xii. 28; Luke xxiv. 15; and "inquire," Luke xxii. 23. ¶ *Grecians.* The Hellenists; either Grecian Jews, that is, Jews of foreign birth, or proselytes to Judaism. See note on Acts vi. 1. ¶ *Went about, &c.* They sought to slay him; they made preparations, or formed plans for his destruction. Their inveteracy against him indicates that they were foreign Jews, rather than proselytes; for it will be found, on examination, that the Gentiles seldom, if ever, violently opposed or persecuted the preachers of Christianity, except when stimulated by the Jews. Follow the apostles through all their wanderings, and the Jews will be found ringleaders and

knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the

prime agents in all the violent movements against them.

30. *Cesarea.* This is generally supposed to be Cesarea on the Mediterranean. See note on Acts viii. 40. Some are of opinion that this place is always intended in the New Testament, unless Philippi be particularly added; by which addition is denoted the city mentioned in Matt. xvi. 13. It has been supposed, however, from Gal. i. 21, that Saul made the whole journey by land; in which case, Cesarea Philippi would lie more directly in his way. Each opinion has its advocates; and it is not easy, if possible, at this day, to determine which is the more correct. ¶ *To Tarsus.* The birth-place of Saul; the principal city in Cilicia. See note on Acts xxii. 3.

31. *Had the churches rest.* The persecution against Christians, which had its first serious outbreak in the case of Stephen, Acts viii. 1, and which was urged on by Saul, Acts viii. 3; ix. 1; xxvi. 9—11, and of which, in his turn, he became a partaker, finally ceased "throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria," soon after his departure from Jerusalem. Various causes have been assigned for this cessation of violent opposition to the church. It has been supposed that most of the Christians had been driven into foreign countries; but this is scarcely consistent with the declaration that the churches had rest and were edified; which surely does not indicate extinction. Again, it has been supposed that the conversion of Saul, one of the leading persecutors, produced this result; but it continued for the space of three years at the least, and expended a portion of its fury upon himself. A more probable reason is, that the Jews were filled with such horror and consternation by a decree of the Roman emperor, Caius Caligula, and were so much dismayed at the prospect of danger from its effects, that they had neither time nor inclination to oppose the Christians,

Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

32 ¶ And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quar-

whom, at that time, they seem to have hated and despised, rather than feared. The matter is thus recounted by Josephus:—"Now Caius Cæsar did so grossly abuse the fortune he had arrived at, as to take himself to be a god, and to desire to be so called also, and to cut off those of the greatest nobility out of his country. He also extended his impiety as far as the Jews. Accordingly, he sent Petronius with an army to Jerusalem, to place his statues in the temple, and commanded him, that in case the Jews would not admit of them, he should slay those that opposed it, and carry all the rest of the nation into captivity; but God concerned himself with those his commands. However, Petronius marched out of Antioch into Judea, with three legions, and many Syrian auxiliaries. Now, as to the Jews, some of them could not believe the stories that spoke of a war, but those that did believe them were in the utmost distress how to defend themselves; and the terror diffused itself presently through them all; for the army was already come to Ptolemais." At an interview with Petronius, the leading Jews besought him to spare them this abomination, alleging that they were strictly prohibited by their law from having any graven image in their land; to which he replied, that he also was bound by law to obey the emperor, and perform his duty faithfully, and intimated that resistance on their part would be considered as rebellion. They then declared plainly and positively, that they offered and were willing to "offer sacrifices twice every day, for Cæsar and for the Roman people; but that, if he would place the images among them, he must first sacrifice the whole Jewish nation; and that they were ready to expose themselves, together with their children and wives, to be slain."—*J. Wars*, B. II., ch. x. § 1, 4. These events are said to have occurred A.D. 39, at about the time when persecution against Christians ceased at Jerusalem. It is easily conceived, that, in such a state of alarm and agitation, little disposition would be felt to continue a domestic persecution, merely

ters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept

through spite. ¶ *Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria*. The different sections of Palestine, or the Holy Land. See notes on Matt. ii. 22; John iv. 4. ¶ *Edified*. Built up, increased in strength. ¶ *Walking*. Conducting: the word often denotes the general course of life, and such is its meaning here. ¶ *Fear of the Lord*. Not that slavish fear which hath torment, but a religious awe and profound veneration. ¶ *Comfort of the Holy Ghost*. They enjoyed the comforting influences of the Spirit, promised by our Lord, John xiv. 16; and their hearts were cheered by the testimony of the Spirit, that they were children of God. Rom. viii. 16.

32. *Peter passed, &c.* Saul having departed to Tarsus, the historian resumes the history of Peter, which was broken off at ver. 25 of the preceding chapter. The precise time when the events occurred which are here narrated, cannot be easily determined. ¶ *All quarters*. That is, through the places where the gospel had been preached. Other disciples proclaimed the gospel; but the apostles alone seem to have appointed and ordained ministers for the several churches which were organized during their lifetime. ¶ *Saints*. Christians. See note on ver. 13. ¶ *Lydda*. This place, called Lud or Lod by the Hebrews, was situated between Jerusalem and Cesarea Philippi, about twelve miles eastward from Joppa, and belonged to the Ephraimites. Wittman says that "Lydda is denominated by the Greeks Diospolis, the city or temple of Jupiter, probably because a temple had been dedicated in its vicinity to that deity. Since the crusades, it has received from the Christians the name of St. George, on account of its having been the scene of the martyrdom and burial of that saint. In this city tradition reports that the Emperor Justinian erected a church." See Robinson's *Calmet*.

33. *Eneas*. This name is Greek; but the individual may have been a Hellenist, a son of Jewish parents, but born where the Greek language was spoken. ¶ *Palsy*. That term of palsy which paralyses the limbs. See note on Matt. iv. 24.

his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

34. *Maketh thee whole.* That is, removes the disability occasioned by the paralysis. As in other cases, so in this, Peter is careful to state distinctly that the miracle was wrought, not by his own power, but by the power of Jesus. See Acts iii. 12—16. One of the most effectual arguments urged by the apostles, in proof that Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended to glory, was founded on the fact that his power, manifested through them, was effectual to the miraculous removal of diseases, and even the restoration of life to the dead, as in ver. 40. ¶ *Make thy bed.* An act which would demonstrate the reality of the cure.

35. *All.* The great mass. A general expression, whose particular meaning must be determined by the circumstances of the case. See note on Matt. iii. 5. ¶ *Saron.* The Sharon of the Hebrews. "This name was almost proverbial to express a place of extraordinary beauty and fruitfulness. Isa. xxxiii. 9; xxxv. 2. It was properly the name of a district south of Mount Carmel, along the coast of the Mediterranean, extending to Cesarea and Joppa."—*Calmct.* Lydda was situated in this region. *Turned to the Lord.* Believed in the gospel which Peter preached.

36. *Joppa.* A city on the seacoast, in the vicinity of Lydda, where Peter performed the miracle of healing, ver. 34, 38. This city, now called Jaffa, "is one of the most ancient seaports in the world, its traditional history stretching far back into the twilight of time. Pliny assigns it a date anterior to the Æluge. It was a border town of the tribe of Dan, and is situated in a fine plain, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, thirty miles south of Cesarea, and forty-five north-west of Jerusalem. It owes all the circumstances of its celebrity, as the principal port of Judea, to its situation with regard to Jerusalem. As a station for vessels, its harbor is one of the worst on the coast. Josephus speaks of it as 'not fit for a haven, on

35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36 ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called

account of the impetuous south winds which beat upon it; which, rolling the sands that come from the sea against the shores, do not admit of ships lying in their station; but the merchants are there generally forced to ride at their anchors on the sea itself.' D'Arvieux, however, is of opinion that this port was anciently much superior to what it is at present. He observed in the sea, south of the port, the vestiges of a wall, which extended to a chain of rocks at some distance from the shore, by which the port was formed, and protected against the violence of the winds. As it was used by Solomon for receiving his timber from Tyre, and by the succeeding kings of Judah, as their port of communication with foreign nations, they would unquestionably bestow upon it all the advantages within their power."—*Calmct.* The present population of Jaffa is variously estimated from five to seven thousand; of whom some are Christians, but the greater part Turks. This place was famous during the crusades, when a general effort was made by the Christian nations of Europe to wrest the Holy Land from the power of the Turks; and, about the commencement of the present century, it attained an unenviable notoriety, by being the scene of a slaughter of prisoners, unequalled in modern warfare. ¶ *Tabitha—Dorcas.* The Hebrew or Syriac Tabitha is interpreted by a Greek name, Dorcas, having the same signification; namely, a roe, or antelope, or gazelle. The Orientals sometimes compare females with animals distinguished for their gracefulness or agility. Cant. ii. 9. Proper names seem also to have been given in the same manner, with reference to some peculiarity in the individual. ¶ *Full of good works, &c.* Distinguished for good works and generosity; one whose kindness and benevolence were remarkable. This accounts for the general grief occasioned by her death, ver. 39. The tears of the poor are a more honorable memorial of the

Dorcas; this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

39 Then Peter arose, and went with them. When he was come,

they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

departed, than the most gorgeous trappings or imposing monuments which wealth can purchase. The one has respect to character; the other, to fortune only.

37. *Whom, when they had washed.* The ancients, like the moderns, were accustomed to wash the bodies of the dead, before interment. In the case of Tabitha, the usual course was pursued; and the body was washed with water, perhaps perfumed with aromatic drugs. ¶ *Upper chamber.* See notes on Matt. vi. 6; xxvi. 19. They had no doubt of her death, nor expectation of her revival.

38. *Nigh to Joppa.* About twelve miles, according to Calmet. ¶ *They sent unto him, &c.* For what special purpose the disciples desired Peter to visit Joppa, the historian does not declare. In their affliction, however, it would be natural that they should wish to receive Christian consolation from him; and it is very probable that this was the principal motive which influenced them. Possibly they hoped a miracle might be performed, and the dead be restored to life: but this is scarcely probable; for no such miracle had yet been performed by any of the apostles. Not even that devoted disciple, who first among the faithful yielded up his life in defence of Christianity, had been thus raised up.

39. *All the widows stood by him weeping.* These were not hired mourners, such as were sometimes procured, to bewail the dead; but the circumstances clearly indicate the sincerity of their

grief. ¶ *Coats and garments.* These were exhibited as memorials of her "good works and alms-deeds." Remembering her generosity to the needy, and having before them visible tokens of such generosity, the loss which the poor and destitute had sustained in her death was most painfully realized, and their tears flowed freely.

40. *Put them all forth.* Caused them all to leave the room, so that he remained alone with the dead body. On a similar occasion, our Lord suffered none to be present, except a very few. Mark v. 40; Luke viii. 51. Perhaps Peter was unwilling to seem ostentatious, or to have others witness the fervor of his supplication for divine aid; or, which is quite as probable, he may have feared his mind would be disturbed or distracted by the presence and lamentations of a crowd, when he desired to fix his attention upon a single point. ¶ *Prayed.* Like his divine Master, he implored strength from above, knowing that his own power was inadequate to the performance of the miracle. See notes on John xi. 41—43. ¶ *Tabitha, arise.* See note on Mark v. 41.

41. *Lifted her up.* As an immediate effect, following the prayer and address of Peter, life returned to the body of Tabitha, and she sat up. He then took her by the hand, and assisted her to rise upon her feet; when it would seem her strength was more fully restored, and he presented her alive to her anxious friends.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa: and many believed in the Lord.

42. *It was known*, &c. Intelligence of such a marvellous deed would naturally be communicated with great rapidity. ¶ *Many believed*. This effect was natural. Indeed, the main design of miracles manifestly was to fix attention, and to convince men that those by whose instrumentality they were performed were accredited messengers of the Most High, and entitled to full and undoubting belief when speaking in his name. See note on John xi. 42.

43. *Tarried many days*. The people being thus prepared to profit by his ministry, Peter remained for a time, that he might not only confirm their faith in Jesus, but instruct them more fully concerning his character and precepts, and their own duty. He thus aided them to increase in knowledge as well as in grace. 2 Pet. iii. 18. ¶ *Simon a tanner*. Nothing is known concerning this individual, except what is recorded here and in Acts x. 6. Probably he was one of the faithful, and gladly embraced the spiritual advantages resulting from his daily intercourse with the apostle.

## CHAPTER X.

A new and very important scene opens upon the view, in this chapter. The historian relates the circumstances which resulted in a vast enlargement of horizon to the spiritual vision of Peter and the other apostles. Notwithstanding the prophets had clearly predicted that the Gentiles should share with the Jews in the blessings of the Messiah's reign, yet the apostles, in common with their kindred according to the flesh, cherished the idea that the Jews were the *peculiar people* of God; and that to them chiefly, if not entirely, belonged the gifts which the Messiah would bestow. They shared also in the expectation that the Messiah would establish an earthly kingdom, to which all the kingdoms of the world should become subject. All the instructions of Jesus did not dispossess them of this expectation, nor did even his death. Instead of doubting the correctness of their long-cherished error, they rather

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

doubted the Messiahship of Jesus. See note on Luke xxiv. 21. And when their faith in him was reassured by his resurrection, their hopes of temporal dominion and sovereignty returned in full force. See note on Acts i. 6. This mistake concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom was naturally connected with another concerning the number who should derive benefits from it. The Jews were to be exalted, and the Gentiles brought under subjection to them; of course, the Jews should share most largely in the blessings. When they became convinced, by the influence of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Jesus, that their dream of a temporal kingdom, with its dazzling splendor and power, was *only* a dream, and that the kingdom of Christ was a spiritual kingdom, dwelling and operating in the hearts of men, they seem not to have comprehended at once its universal extent. On the contrary, while they obtained a correct idea of its nature, they retained the old error concerning the limitation of its blessings to the Jewish people. They could not have forgotten, that, though first directed to preach only to the Jews, their commission had subsequently been enlarged, and that their Master had instructed them to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Matt. x. 5, 6; xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15. Whether by this they understood themselves to be commanded to preach to the Jews, not only in Judea, but wherever dispersed among all nations, — or whether they supposed the Samaritans to be included, who had been formerly excluded by name, or whether they supposed the proselytes from the Gentiles were included also, — or however else they may have understood the final commission given them by the Lord Jesus, — it is clear that they did *not* understand that the gospel was to be preached to the heathen and uncircumcised, as freely and effectually as to the Jews. Whatever may have been done in Damascus and Arabia by Saul, afterwards styled the apostle of the uncircumcision, Peter and his associates of the Twelve confined their ministrations to the seed of

## CHAPTER X.

**T**HERE was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a

Jacob, until God convinced them by miracle that he was no respecter of persons, but that he loved and would bless the Gentiles in common with the Jews. Then, indeed, they glorified God, and proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles; and thenceforth regarded all men as the children of one Father, and joint heirs of the same inheritance. In this and the succeeding chapter, the historian relates the manner in which they were converted from a limited and narrow to an all-embracing faith. And he relates these circumstances the more minutely, because the Jewish Christians entertained the same exclusive ideas concerning the benefits to be communicated by the Messiah, and were unwilling to admit the Gentiles to a participation of them,—at least, unless they should first become proselytes, so far as to be circumcised, and conform to the other rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law. The state of the public mind in the church may be estimated from that of the apostles. Acts xi. 1—3. See also Acts xv. 1—29. It was therefore important that they should be convinced, by evidence which could not be misunderstood nor resisted, that the partition wall between them and the Gentiles was broken down. But it was very difficult to eradicate their prejudices entirely; and in his epistles, Paul devoted much labor for that purpose.

1. *Cesarea*. Namely, Cesarea, on the Mediterranean. See note on Acts viii. 40. *Cornelius*. A Latin name in common use among the Romans. The individual seems to have been a Roman citizen, as well as a Roman officer. Some have supposed that he was a "proselyte of the gate," that is, one who conformed, in part, to the Jewish religion, but was not circumcised. There is no discoverable evidence that such was the fact. Indeed the contrary appears more probable; because (1.) Peter would not call such a one common or unclean, ver. 28; (2.) the conversion of Cornelius and his household is alleged as evidence that God had granted to the Gentiles, repentance unto life. Acts xi. 18. But the con-

centurion of the band called the Italian band,

2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which

version of a proselyte would not go far towards convincing the Jews that the Gentiles were joint heirs with them to the inheritance of the gospel; for they admitted that the proselytes were entitled to many privileges and blessings which were denied to the mass of the Gentiles. The only effectual proof to them would be the conversion of one who was to all intents and purposes a Gentile, and a fair representative of his whole class. ¶ *Centurion*. The captain of a century, or a hundred men,—the number assigned to a certain division of the Roman army. See note on Matt. viii. 5. ¶ *The band called the Italian band*. The repetition of the word *band* is unnecessary, and not according to the original. The word rendered *band* is generally supposed here to mean a *cohort*, or the tenth part of a Roman *legion*. The cohort ordinarily consisted of about six hundred men. See note on Matt. xxvii. 27. In the Roman army were soldiers of various nations. Almost every conquered country contributed a portion of troops to increase the armed host of the Roman emperor. Yet it seems reasonable that the principal officers of the government would prefer, for their special guard, native-born troops. Cesarea was a royal garrison, the residence of the provincial governor; and very probably he was furnished with a band of native Italians; hence, perhaps, the name, "Italian band."

2. *Devout man*. Though a heathen, he was a religious man. His religion was of the right stamp; for he revered God, communed with him in prayer, and promoted the welfare of men by deeds of generosity and benevolence. ¶ *Feared God*. See note on Acts ix. 31. By intercourse with the Jews, or otherwise, he seems to have learned the doctrine of one God; and that God he revered and adored, and to him he prayed. ¶ *With all his house*. His family. He not only worshipped God, but he so instructed his family, and impressed on their minds a sense of the divine goodness, that they also worshipped him. ¶ *Gave much alms, &c.* Was very generous to the

gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

3 He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are

poor. ¶ *Prayed to God always.* Maintained a constant habit of devotion. In the case of Saul, God indicated his ability to soften the heart of the most obdurate sinner. In this case, he indicated the necessity that even a man of good moral character should believe in Jesus and learn of him, in order to become a Christian. The former character of Cornelius rendered him peculiarly fit to be selected as the first-fruits of the Gentiles.

3. *He saw in a vision evidently.* The phrase indicates that Cornelius was awake, when the vision appeared, and not, as has happened to others, dreaming; and he himself says that he was at that time engaged in prayer, ver. 30. ¶ *Ninth hour of the day.* Three o'clock in the afternoon, according to our manner of reckoning. This was the hour of evening prayer, in the daily worship of the Jews. ¶ *An angel of God.* See note on Luke i. 11. There can be little question that this angel was superhuman, though men, and even inanimate objects, are sometimes called by the same name. What follows, to ver. 6, purports to be an account of what passed during the vision.

4. *Looked on him.* That is, on the angel, who had the form of a man in bright or shining apparel, ver. 30. ¶ *Afraid.* Startled at the sudden and unexpected appearance of the angel, and filled with that undefinable dread which is always produced by the sensation that one is standing in the presence of a superhuman being. See note on Luke i. 12. ¶ *What is it, Lord?* See note on Acts ix. 5. The question indicates the surprise and alarm of Cornelius; an involuntary ejaculation, equivalent to "What is that?" or "What does this mean?" ¶ *Thy prayers and thine alms, &c.* "The acceptableness to the Divine Being of his piety and benevolence is simply described

come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which

in a metaphor, taken from the ascension to heaven of the smoke and the burning incense of the sacrifices. Cornelius was faithful to the light he enjoyed; his heart was engaged in his duty; and although he was yet unenlightened in many respects, yet his service was acceptable to Him who searches the heart."—*Livermore*. It may be remarked here, that the revelation of Jesus and his gospel either was morally advantageous to Cornelius, or it was not: if not, then we must suppose that a useless miracle was wrought; but if it was, then it follows, that, notwithstanding his service, being according to the light he enjoyed, was acceptable, yet it might become more perfect, and he might attain yet higher excellence, by embracing Jesus as a Saviour and obeying his commandments. Perhaps a serious consideration of this subject might not be unprofitable to those who imagine that faith is of no consequence, and insist that an upright life is not only the one thing but indeed the only thing necessary.

5. *Joppa.* See note on Acts ix. 36.

6. *By the seaside.* On the shore of the Mediterranean. It is customary, when circumstances will admit, to erect tanneries by the side of running or moving waters; because (1.) a large supply of water is required in the process of preparing hides to be converted into leather; and (2.) a ready and convenient means is thus afforded for draining off the water which has been used, and which would become very offensive if allowed to form stagnant pools. ¶ *He shall tell, &c.* He shall give you instructions, and more fully declare the divine will. This clause is rejected as spurious by Griesbach and Knapp.

7. *He called, &c.* He manifested the utmost readiness to obey. It seems not to have occurred to him, that, if his or-



spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 ¶ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh

dinary religious and moral service was acceptable to God, nothing more was necessary. He both sent immediately for Peter, and, when he arrived, professed his readiness to be further instructed concerning truth and duty. See ver. 33. ¶ *Devout soldier.* The influence of Cornelius was felt, not only in his own family, but among the soldiers under his command. Though the camp is not considered a favorable place for the cultivation of piety, there have been devout soldiers, who appealed to God, in full sincerity of heart, to bless their exertions in defence of their country, their wives, and their little ones, against the fury of the destroyer; and surely no class of men have greater need of the sustaining influences of religion, than they whose appointed labor is attended with peril to their lives. History abundantly confirms the fact, that no soldiers are so formidable in battle, as they who trust in God, and who can pray as well as fight.

8. *When he had declared, &c.* So that they could communicate an intelligible message to Peter, as in ver. 22.

9. *House-top.* Perhaps literally on the roof of the house, which, being flat, according to the eastern fashion, afforded a convenient place for retirement. See notes on Matt. ix. 2; xxiv. 17. But, more probably, the reference is to the small room in the top of the house, elsewhere called "closet," "upper room," and "upper chamber," which was more retired and more suitable for meditation and prayer. See notes on Matt. vi. 6; xxvi. 19. ¶ *About the sixth hour.* About noon.

10. *Became very hungry.* "Not only the inhabitants of the East, generally, but the Greeks and Romans also, were in the habit of taking a slight dinner about ten or eleven o'clock of our time, which consisted chiefly of fruits, milk, cheese, &c. Their principal meal was about six or seven in the afternoon;

unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour:

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto

their feasts were always appointed at supper-time, for the burning heat of noon in Eastern climates diminishes the appetite for food, and suppresses the disposition to cheerfulness."—*Jahn*. It would seem that Peter had not yet eaten his first meal for the day, but had devoted himself to fasting and prayer, like Cornelius, ver. 30. ¶ *While they made ready.* While they were preparing food for him. ¶ *He fell into a trance.* Or, a trance or ecstasy fell upon him. The Greek *ekstasis* (ἐκστασις), *ecstasy*, denotes a state when the mind, in a great measure, becomes free from all material influences, and is spiritually excited and moved. It "sometimes signifies amazement and astonishment, from fear or wonder. Mark v. 42, and xvi. 8; Luke v. 26; Acts iii. 10; and sometimes a trance or ecstasy, when, the outward senses being bound up as it were with sleep, God's will is inwardly revealed to the understanding, by way of intellectual vision. Thus it is in all other places of the New Testament." *Hummond*.

11. *Saw heaven opened.* See note on Acts vii. 56. To him it appeared as if the blue canopy over his head was divided asunder, from which descended the symbolical vessel, even as the Revelator saw the new Jerusalem descending in like manner, Rev. xxi. 2. ¶ *Certain vessel.* The common name of any utensil or implement, especially such as were capable of containing. ¶ *As it had been.* Or, as it were. It should be observed that the vessel is not said to have been actually a sheet, or to have had the exact appearance of a sheet: but this form of speech denotes that the vessel was *like* that which might be made by fastening together the four corners of a sheet. Nor is it said that Peter actually saw such a vessel with his bodily eyes; but the impression on his mind was precisely the same as if he had seen it. ¶ *Knit*

him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

*at the four corners.* United, or secured together, at the four corners.

12. *Wherein, &c.* The contents of the vessel, or the *form* of the vision, had a connection with Peter's fastings. He saw before him the means of appeasing his hunger. "It was designed, however, to teach him an important lesson in regard to the introduction of all nations to the gospel. Its descending from heaven may have been an intimation that the religion which was about to abolish the distinction between the Jews and other nations was of divine origin. See Rev. xxi. 2."—*Barnes. Four-footed beasts, &c.* From the minuteness of the description, and the accumulation of particulars, it is manifest that all kinds of animals are intended to be included, whether inhabiting the earth, the air, or the water, and whether, according to the Jewish law, clean or unclean. This collection of animals, not a single species being excluded, seems to denote the universal gathering together of all nations of men, both clean and unclean, both the good and the evil, the just and the unjust. Such was the lesson impressed on the mind of Peter, ver. 28.

13. *Kill and eat.* The imagery of the vision was conformed to the state of Peter's body; its spiritual import was impressed on his mind afterwards. Literally, the command was, that he should appease his hunger, by eating the flesh of animals accounted unclean, either of themselves or by contact with others.

14. *Not so, Lord, &c.* Peter had not yet learned that the Mosaic law of forms and ceremonies was to pass away, with its distinctions of clean and unclean, sacred and common. He still retained his Jewish prejudices, and would rather suffer the pangs of hunger than pollute himself with any thing which the law pronounced unclean. By the manner in which he declared he had never eaten any thing common or unclean, we are to understand his

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What

unwillingness to do so on this occasion.

15. *What God hath cleansed, &c.* "We here come to the practical point of application. The vision was designed to convey an important lesson, the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual, and the introduction of the Gentiles into the Christian church. The literal sense, indeed, was that the distinction had ceased between clean and unclean animals, and that they might be eaten indiscriminately without fear of pollution: but the spiritual import was, that the Jewish peculiarity henceforth ceased; that the Gentiles were no more to be regarded as common or unclean, or to be rejected from the Christian brotherhood, as unworthy of participation with Jewish converts in the blessings of the gospel. It was to teach a lofty lesson of superiority to religious bigotry and national clanship; that God viewed all mankind with equal regard; that all were his children, and brethren one of another. What lesson can be more important and practical than this, in its bearing upon political privileges, social classes, and religious sects! We are to call no man, whatever be their color, condition, avocation, or religious sect, common or unclean, since all are dear in the sight of the infinite Father, and should be dear to one another. What God hath cleansed, that call not thou, or account not thou, common."—*Livermore.* All this, doubtless, was spiritually taught by the vision; and, I apprehend, somewhat more. Peter himself was taught thereby to call no man common or unclean, ver. 28, because God had cleansed all. They were cleansed, not only ritually or ceremonially, but actually. They were thus cleansed, in the purpose of God; and as he "calleth those things which be not, as though they were," Rom. iv. 17, he speaks of them as already cleansed. In like manner, the apostle to the Hebrews asserts that all things are put in subjection under the feet of the Lord Jesus; which

God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now, while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's

he explains by saying that, although all things be not yet actually put under him, yet that has been done,—namely, the exaltation of Jesus to glory and honor, having tasted death for every man,—which places the result beyond doubt. Heb. ii. 8, 9. Peter and his apostolic brethren were convinced, by the whole transaction, that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life, Acts xi. 18; and if to any, then to all; for all were cleansed and placed on the same footing, according to the obvious import of the vision. While I acknowledge the truth of the theological axiom, that similitudes do not run on all fours, and that it is therefore unwise to seek a spiritual import of every portion of a parable, inasmuch as a part is merely imagery; and while I acknowledge that visions may require the same rule of interpretation; still I think it allowable to pay more regard, than some choose, to the fact, that the appearance of a sheet with all its contents “was received up again into heaven,” ver. 16. So far as earthly distinctions among men are concerned, the whole object of the vision was accomplished, before the “vessel was received up;” and for this purpose alone, it might then have vanished into thin air. But the whole collection, clean and unclean in human judgment, but all cleansed in the divine purpose, was received up into heaven; teaching symbolically what is elsewhere taught more plainly, that, as the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, so, having been lifted up from the earth, and offered his blood or given himself a ransom for all, our Lord will draw all men unto himself, and receive them up into heaven. John xii. 32; 1 Tim. ii. 6; 1 John i. 7.

16. *Done thrice.* Earnestness is sometimes expressed by repetition. The impression was very distinctly

house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

made on the mind of Peter, that the scene presented before him was not illusory, but of serious and solemn import.

17. *Doubted in himself.* Was perplexed; not able at once to perceive the spiritual truth taught by the vision. That such truth was taught he manifested no doubt. The application of the vision, or the particular subject to which it was to be applied, was the only cause of perplexity. ¶ *The men which were sent, &c.* See ver. 7, 8. The whole transaction was under the divine superintendence, and its several parts were therefore arranged in perfect harmony. The vision was presented to Peter, in season to prepare him for the message from Cornelius, and not so long before as that he should lose the memory of a single particular. At the very moment when he needed divine guidance, he received it. ¶ *Before the gate.* Or, before the door. The original word is used to denote the porch or entrance to a house, Matt. xxvi. 71, as well as the gate of a city. Rev. xxi. 21.

18. *Surnamed Peter.* See note on Matt. x. 2.

19. *Peter thought, &c.* See note on ver. 17. ¶ *The Spirit said.* A distinct impression was made on his mind, by that divine Spirit under whose influence and guidance he acted. See John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7—14; Acts viii. 29.

20. *Doubting nothing.* This admonition seems to have reference to the scruples of the Jews concerning intercourse with the Gentiles, whom they regarded as unclean. By this intimation of the Spirit, that such scruples ought not to be indulged, Peter learned in part the meaning of the vision. See ver. 28. He was thus prepared to go with the men whom God had sent, or who had come in accordance with the divine direction to Cornelius, of whatever name or nation they might be.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that

feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow

21. *I am he whom ye seek.* He did not wait for them to designate him as the person sought; for he knew it already, by the suggestion of the Spirit, ver. 19. ¶ *What is the cause, &c.* Though Peter knew that the men sought him, he knew not yet for what special purpose they had come, and therefore questioned them. This is an instance of that economy of miracle, so observable in the scriptures. Peter could not know, without special divine instruction, that the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles was broken down, and that all were now to be accounted equally clean in the sight of God. This was so entirely inconsistent with his Jewish prejudices, and indeed with the Mosaic law itself, that neither he nor the other apostles were able to grasp the idea effectually until it was made distinctly plain by the direct operation of the divine Spirit. On this point, therefore, he received miraculous instruction; and, to impress its reality the more forcibly, it was added that he would find three men seeking for him, with whom he should go, doubting nothing, whosoever they might desire. But their special business was not thus revealed to him, because he was able to obtain the information from them. A miracle, for this purpose, would have been unnecessary; and it was not performed. A reputed miracle for the accomplishment of an object easily accomplished by ordinary means bears very suspicious marks, and justifies a rigid and even jealous examination.

22. *They said, &c.* Instead of simply communicating the request of Cornelius that Peter should visit him, lest a national prejudice should interfere with their success, they briefly recapitulated the circumstances of the vision, so that the call on Peter might appear to be from God rather than from men. ¶ *To hear words of thee.* To be instructed by thee. This message, in connection with the vision, convinced Peter

that he was truly called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; and it does not appear that he interposed the slightest objection, or manifested any unwillingness, to obey the divine call.

23. *Lodged them.* They tarried with him over night. It may seem singular, in these days of rapid travelling, that the messengers of Cornelius were absent three nights on their journey to Joppa, since the distance of that place from Cesarea was only about thirty miles. Such, however, seems to have been the fact. Cornelius saw the vision in the afternoon, ver. 3, and despatched the messengers, ver. 8; on the morrow, about noon, they arrived at Joppa, ver. 9, 17; there they remained until the next day, ver. 23; "and the morrow after," they entered into Cesarea, ver. 24. See also ver. 30. But it must be remembered that this journey was performed on foot, and in a country where travelling was laborious and tedious, the paths being rough and uneven. ¶ *Certain brethren.* Six fellow-disciples accompanied Peter, on this journey, Acts xi. 12; possibly more. It was not unusual for the early Christians to travel with the apostles. See Acts xv. 3; xxi. 5, 8. And on an occasion so unusual as a mission to the Gentiles, it may well be supposed that Peter desired company, and his brethren were anxious to witness the result. Six of them were thus able to give personal testimony concerning all which there occurred, when Peter was accused before the other apostles of having associated and eaten with the uncircumcised, Acts xi. 3, 12. Peter, having already opened the door of the gospel to the Jews, Acts ii. 14, is now selected to perform the like office for the Gentiles, which was done publicly and with suitable solemnity. And herein many suppose was fulfilled the special duty assigned him, when the keys of the kingdom were committed to his charge. See note on Matt. xvi. 19. The general power and authority, to be sure, was

Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 ¶ And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell

entrusted to all the apostles; yet there seems a special reference to Peter; and he was certainly foremost among the Twelve, in using the keys of the kingdom for the benefit of both Jews and Gentiles.

24. *Kinsmen and near friends.* Cornelius was far from wishing to monopolize the blessing which he anticipated. It had been promised, that Peter would inform him what he ought to do, ver. 6; or, as it is elsewhere expressed, would impart that by which he and his household should be saved. Acts xi. 14. He did not selfishly desire the exclusive benefit of this blessing, but invited his relatives and friends to share it with him. He had seasonably called them in, about the time when Peter was expected; and they together awaited the apostle's approach. Such conduct is strictly in accordance with that spirit of universal love, and that regard for the welfare of the great human brotherhood, which is a distinguishing characteristic of pure religion; and the furthest possible from that miserable exclusiveness which would debar others from the choicest blessings of earth or heaven.

25. *Worshipped him.* It is not to be supposed that Cornelius, a devout man who feared and worshipped God, would offer religious homage to a man. No more is here implied by worshipping, than that profound respect which the Orientals were accustomed to pay to superiors. See notes on Matt. ii. 2, 11. Before kings and others of exalted rank, the people prostrated themselves upon the ground. Cornelius regarded Peter as his superior, because he was a special messenger of the Most High, and was in possession of most important truth; and therefore he saluted him as a superior, and rendered to him that homage or worship which he supposed to be fit and proper.

down at his feet, and worshipped him.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up: I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful

26. *I myself also am a man.* Peter would not permit Cornelius to remain prostrate, inasmuch as it implied a greater disparity between man and man than he was willing to admit. He knew himself to be endowed with miraculous powers, but would not have it supposed that he claimed reverence on that account: he rather directed men to reverence Him who granted those powers. See Acts iii. 12. So he knew that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him; but he desired only to be regarded as a true messenger and a faithful servant to his great master, laboring for the benefit of his fellow-men. The meaning of the whole passage is well expressed in the paraphrase by Doddridge:—"As Peter was entering into his house, Cornelius met him; and, to express his reverence to one so remarkably the messenger of heaven, falling down at his feet, paid homage to him. But Peter would by no means permit this; and therefore raised him up, saying, Arise, for I also myself am nothing more than a man as thou art, and pretend to no right to such profound respects as these, but am ready in civil life to pay thee all the regard that is due to thee."

27. *As he talked, &c.* The scene before narrated occurred near the door, as Peter was about to enter the house, ver 25. Having raised up Cornelius, and while explaining to him his reason for declining such profound homage, he passed into the house, where he found the "kinsmen and near friends" of Cornelius, who had been called together, ver. 24.

28. *Unlawful, &c.* The Jews considered it unlawful to eat with the uncircumcised, or to enter their houses. Such had been the opinion of Peter, until otherwise instructed by the Spirit; and such was still the opinion of the other apostles and the disciples gener-

thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in

my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner, by the seaside: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

ally, in common with the whole nation of the Jews. Acts xi. 1—3. This opinion, common and universal as it was, seems founded on the glosses put on the law by the scribes and other teachers, rather than on the law itself. Moses had forbidden marriages with people of other nations, that the stock of Israel might remain pure and unadulterated. But he nowhere prohibited the ordinary civil and courteous intercourse of life. Indeed the Jews themselves did not consider a degree of intercourse unlawful; but the two prohibitions, here mentioned by Peter, were regarded as absolutely essential, — though even these rested on human authority alone. ¶ *To keep company.* To associate with; to be intimately connected with. See Acts v. 13; ix. 26. As before suggested, the Jews seem not to have understood that all intercourse with the Gentiles was prohibited; but only entering their houses, and eating with them. “They might walk, and talk, and traffic with them; and it was within a little of impossible to do otherwise, they living, exceeding many of them, in heathen cities; and Gentiles came continually, in way of trade, to Jerusalem, Neh. xiii. 16. But the unlawfulness of their conversing with the Gentiles was conversing in near and more close society; and that especially in these two things, ‘not to eat with them,’ and ‘not to go into their houses.’ And this is that for which they of the circumcision excepted of Peter upon his return. Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them,” Acts xi. 3.”—*Lightfoot*. So bigoted on this point were the Jews, and so strong were the prejudices of the Jewish Christians, that even Peter, on a subsequent occasion, yielded his better judgment, enlightened as it was by

divine revelation, and conformed to their prejudice and bigotry; for which “dissimulation,” he was reproved by the more steadfast and uncompromising Paul. See Gal. ii. 11—13. The abolition of this distinction between Jews and Gentiles was one of the principal causes of controversy and heart-burning among the early Christians. But the Gentile brethren had in Paul an ardent and unflinching advocate of their rights and privileges, who would not suffer the slightest encroachment on them to pass without rebuke. ¶ *Another nation.* Meaning any or all who were not Jews. ¶ *God hath showed me, &c.* By the vision, ver. 11—16.

29. *Gainsaying.* Objecting, opposing, or contradicting. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but yielded a prompt and unhesitating compliance to the request of Cornelius, enforced as it was by a divine command, ver. 20. ¶ *I ask, therefore, for what intent, &c.* He had received from the messengers of Cornelius a general account of their master's purpose and desire; but they did not mention the special service which Peter was expected to accomplish by his visit. Hence Cornelius was required to state, in presence of his assembled friends, his desires and his expectations.

30. *Four days ago.* See note on ver. 23. The length of time was about three days of twenty-four hours each; but, as part of four days was consumed, the Jews accounted the time as four days; and Cornelius seems to have used the words in the same sense. See note on Matt. xxvii. 64. ¶ *This hour.* The ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. ¶ *A man.* Called an angel, ver. 3. The divine messenger appeared in the form of a man. ¶ *Bright clothing.* Or shining apparel; the usual ex-

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God,

ternal garb attributed to angels. See Matt. xxviii. 3; Luke xxiv. 4.

31, 32. See notes on ver. 4—6.

33. *Thou hast well done.* This must be understood as an expression of gratitude on the part of Cornelius; equivalent to saying, Thou hast conferred a special favor on me; or, thou hast been very kind. Venerating Peter as he evidently did, Cornelius would not presume to pass judgment upon his conduct, in this instance, as consistent or inconsistent with duty. ¶ *Present before God.* In the presence of God. God is witness to this meeting. He sees our hearts, and knows our willingness and desire to hear from thee whatsoever he hath commanded. This solemn appeal denotes the sincerity of Cornelius, and his fitness to hear the word with profit to his own soul. How few of the number who listen to the gospel, from Sabbath to Sabbath, can appeal to God with equal sincerity and truth, that they are duly prepared to receive the blessing!

34. *Of a truth.* Truly, verily. By this time, Peter was fully convinced that God is no respecter of persons, and that all are equally dear in his sight; that the fancy, so fondly entertained by the Jews, that they were not only the special favorites of Heaven, but destined to the exclusive enjoyment of spiritual blessings, was vain and illusory. The truth flashed on his mind, and he did not hesitate to utter it, in the hearing of both Jews and Gentiles. ¶ *God is no respecter of persons.* The special truth which Peter designed to utter, as is manifest from the succeeding verse, is, that God respects or favors no man on account of his national character or descent. The opinion had long prevailed, that the Jews were peculiar objects of his favor and regard; so much so, that a wicked Jew was more favorably regarded by him than a virtuous Gentile. Though Peter had once entertained the same opinion, he was now convinced of its falsity. He perceived that distinctions of nation were of no account with the Supreme Governor. Hence he perceived also the propriety of proclaiming the gospel to

to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 ¶ Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I per-

the Gentiles, in common with the Jews, as they were equally entitled to its blessings. Accordingly, he proceeded without hesitation to preach Jesus to the company there assembled, and to baptize them as soon as he perceived the decisive marks of their belief. With equal truth, it may be said that God is no respecter of persons, on account of their condition, color, rank, or position in society. All these distinctions, so important in the opinion of many, are of no consequence in his sight, so far as it regards his favor or affection towards them. Faithfulness to one's light and the improvement of all privileges enjoyed, purity of heart and life,—this is the main point; all else is of minor importance. The pure-hearted servant, though clothed in rags and borne down by excessive labor, is viewed with more complacency by the Searcher of hearts, than the polluted and ungodly master, though lapped in luxury and clothed in purple and fine linen. But this is not the special lesson taught in the text, which relates only to national distinctions generally, and the distinction between the Jews and all others in particular. All nations stand on the same level, in respect to the benevolent regards of God; and no one is entitled to a monopoly of his blessings. If he bestow on one nation higher privileges than others enjoy, it is not so much because he loves them more, as that they may be instrumental in communicating blessings to others. The true object of bestowing blessings on individuals is, that benefit may accrue to the race. See Matt. v. 14—16; x. 27. Thus the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, Rom. iii. 1, 2, not because they were more dear than other nations in his sight, but that they should preserve the doctrine of the one God, and a history of his providences, for the general benefit of the world. And the time had now come when this truth was to be manifested; they were no longer to be sole stewards of the divine treasures, but other nations also were to be admitted with them into the stewardship. Such I take to be the special truth asserted by Peter. But this special truth

ceive that God is no respecter of persons :

35 But in every nation, he that

rests on another, more general in its character, and underlying it ; namely, that all men are the children of one Father, and equally dear in his sight. And though he has committed to them different privileges, and assigned them different spheres of action, still his benevolence is equal towards all. This truth is so plainly manifested in the natural world, that our Lord confidently appealed to that manifestation, in proof of the fact. See Matt. v. 43—48. For this reason, he sent his Son for the benefit of all, and hath given assurance that, in due time, all shall partake of that benefit.

35. *In every nation.* Gentiles as well as Jews. The single point, in direct question here, was, whether the Jews were the exclusive recipients of spiritual blessings, or whether God would also bestow them on others. "The remarkable circumstances here, the vision to him and to Cornelius, and the declaration that the alms of Cornelius were accepted, now convinced Peter that the favors of God were no longer to be confined to the Jewish people, but might be extended to all. This was what the vision was designed to teach ; and to communicate this to the apostles was an important step in their work of spreading the gospel."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Feareth him.* Reverences him ; regards his power and authority, and submits, with confidence in his goodness, to all the dispensations of his providence. Nearly the same idea is implied in *loving* God, as in *fearing* him, with such fear as he demands or as is acceptable in his sight. ¶ *Worketh righteousness.* Doeth right, performeth his duty. This has special reference to the conduct of man with man. In the two particulars here named, piety towards God, and benevolence and justice towards men, is comprehended the whole sum of human duty. See Micah vi. 8 ; Matt. vii. 12 ; xxii. 37—40. ¶ *Is accepted with him.* Is recognized as an obedient child, as one who sincerely endeavors to perform his whole duty. To such, of whatever nation, kindred, or tongue, the Spirit saith, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which *God* sent

Those to whom this grace is given in this present life owe a deep debt of gratitude to their heavenly Father ; and they are bound to manifest their gratitude to him, by striving to promote the welfare of his other children, that they also may know that the Lord is gracious, and may glorify his name. See Matt. v. 16. In the dispensation of the fulness of times, the period may be joyfully anticipated, when every knee shall bow in humble reverence and love, confess the Lord Jesus as the true Messiah, yield a cheerful obedience to all the divine requirements, and become equal to the angels, the children of God being the children of the resurrection. Phil. ii. 10, 11 ; 1 Cor. xv. 24—28 ; Luke xx. 36.

36. *The word, &c.* Namely, the gospel or revelation of grace ; to express which, a periphrasis is used. Instead of the single word, which literally signifies good tidings, a description of the tidings is given, namely, the preaching of peace by Jesus Christ, whom God hath appointed Lord of all. See 1 Cor. xv. 27 ; Phil. ii. 9. Barnes paraphrases this verse, and a part of what follows, thus :—"In regard to the *word* or the doctrine which God sent to the children of Israel, proclaiming peace through Jesus Christ (who is Lord of all), you know already that which was done, or the transactions which occurred throughout all Judea, from Galilee, where he commenced after John had preached, that this was by Jesus Christ, since God had anointed him, &c." He adds, "Peter here assumes that Cornelius had some knowledge of the principal events in the life of the Saviour, though it was obscure and imperfect ; and his discourse professes only to state this more fully and clearly. He commences his discourse with stating the true doctrine on the subject, and explaining more perfectly that of which Cornelius had been only imperfectly informed." ¶ *Children of Israel.* The Jews ; so called, on account of their descent from Israel, otherwise called Jacob. To them first was Jesus sent, that they might be turned from their evil thoughts and deeds See Acts iii. 26. ¶ *Preaching peace*



unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee,

The mission of Jesus was designed to fill the hearts of men with peace, by inspiring confidence in God, and purifying from sin. He was called Jesus, because he came to save his people from their sins. Matt. i. 21. His advent was good and joyful tidings to all men, because he was to be their Saviour. And in anticipation of the blessings to be conferred on mankind through him, and the state of universal and endless peace which should crown his labors, the heavenly host celebrated his birth, in a song of gladness, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke ii. 10—14. ¶ *He is Lord of all.* That exalted personage who was appointed to perform the mighty work of regenerating the world, turning men away from their iniquities, saving them from sin, inspiring in their hearts a pure love of God and of holiness, and finally making them perfect in his own image and likeness, was clothed with abundant power for the accomplishment of his work. All power in heaven and in earth was given to him. Matt. xxviii. 18. A name was given him above every name, that all might worship in and through him. Phil. ii. 9—11. He was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Acts v. 31. And to him was given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as were given him, namely, to all flesh, or to every man. John xvii. 2. Clothed with such authority and such power, and for such a noble and glorious purpose, with much propriety is he styled Lord of all. Nevertheless it should not be forgotten, when it is said that "all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28. A glorious consummation, worthy of the God who designed the plan, and of that

after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were op-

divine personage to whom was committed its accomplishment.

37. *That word.* Rather, that thing, or occurrence. The original is not the same as in the preceding verse. ¶ *Which was published.* Or was, or was done. The meaning seems to be this: Ye have heard at least of the events which so recently occurred and became known in Judea, beginning at Galilee, &c. ¶ *Throughout all Judea.* Not that Jesus actually travelled, and preached, and wrought miracles, in every city and village in Judea; but these things were done in many places, and the whole country was filled with astonishment. It may well be supposed, that part of Judea was ignorant of the life and death of Jesus. ¶ *Began from Galilee.* In Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, Jesus was "brought up." Luke iv. 16. There also he preached for a considerable time, and appointed the Twelve Apostles. His adversaries accused him of teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee. Luke xxiii. 5. ¶ *Baptism which John preached.* That is, John the Baptist. See Matt. iii. 1—12. Cornelius could not be supposed entirely ignorant of these events; for Cesarea was not far from Galilee; and, moreover, Philip returned to Cesarea, after the conversion of the eunuch, and had not probably been silent on the subject.

38. *How God anointed, &c.* That is, set apart, or consecrated, to the great work of reconciling men to God, and saving them from sin. 2 Cor. v. 17—20; Matt. i. 21. This was the work committed to his charge; and to its accomplishment he was consecrated, being filled with the Holy Ghost and with power, or with the power of the Holy Ghost. The figure is taken from the manner in which rulers and priests were consecrated, or set apart, to their respective offices. See notes on Matt. i. 1; Luke iv. 18. ¶ *With the Holy Ghost and with power.* Many commentators refer this to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at his

pressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

baptism, Matt. iii. 16, 17, and the power of working miracles. Perhaps the phrase should rather be regarded as a Hebraism, importing *the power of the Holy Spirit*. Jesus was clothed with all the power necessary to the successful accomplishment of the work assigned to him. See note on ver. 36. This power was manifested in the performance of miracles which no man could perform, unless God were with him, John iii. 2; and in the invisible though none the less remarkable influence he is able to exert upon the human heart. If it be necessary to assign a special meaning to the anointing with the *Holy Ghost*, distinct from the *power*, instead of confining it to the descent of the Spirit at the time of baptism, it may better be understood to mean that constant influence of the divine Spirit which he enjoyed without stint or measure, by which he became the image of God among men, and of which the visible descent of the Spirit was only emblematical. See note on John iii. 34. ¶ *Went about doing good*. "Whose main business it was to travel from place to place to do good. He did not go for applause, or wealth, or comfort, or ease, but to diffuse happiness as far as possible. This is the simple but sublime record of his life. This, in few but most affecting words, tells us all about the Saviour. It gives us a distinct portrait of his character, as he is distinguished from conquerors and kings, and false prophets, and the mass of men."—*Barnes*. That such was the character of his labors on earth, the whole history of his life attests. He never used his power to make men more unhappy; but often to relieve their distresses, physical, mental, and moral. Even his sharpest rebukes, though producing present pain, were designed for the permanent good of the offenders, that they might be led to repentance and holiness. In no other manner could he have been a true representative on earth of that God whose

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even to us*, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

universal and impartial benevolence he described in such vivid colors. Matt. v. 43—48. See John xiv. 8—11. ¶ *Oppressed of the devil*. See note on Mark v. 1. ¶ *For God was with him*. This accounts for all his marvellous works. God granted him power, and constantly aided him. See John iii. 2.

39. *We are witnesses*. See note on Acts ii. 32. The reference is to the apostles particularly; though many others had a general knowledge of the transactions. ¶ *Slew and hanged*, &c. Rather, slew, hanging or suspending him on a tree. The idea is simply, *Ye crucified him*.

40. *God raised up*. Here, as uniformly elsewhere, the resurrection of Jesus is attributed to God. ¶ *Showed him openly*. Distinctly, plainly; so that his disciples could not doubt the actual resurrection of their Master, and his ascension into glory.

41. *Not to all the people*. It was not necessary that all should see him. The testimony of those who had been familiar with him for years, who witnessed his death and burial, and, from their previous knowledge of him, were able to identify him beyond a possibility of doubt after his resurrection, was sufficient to establish the fact. ¶ *Witnesses*. Of these witnesses, the whole number was more than five hundred. 1 Cor. xv. 6. A less number, however, seems here intended. ¶ *Chosen before of God*. Selected and appointed to be witnesses of the resurrection, as well as of the words and deeds of the Lord Jesus. ¶ *To us*. That is, to the apostles; for to them the description seems confined by what follows. ¶ *Eat and drink with him*, &c. See Luke xxiv. 43; John xxi. 13. By such intimate and familiar intercourse, they had an opportunity to know that there was no deception or illusion in the case. Indeed the evidence was overpowering, and convinced them in spite of their predisposition of mind to the contrary. See note at the end of Matthew.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name who-

soever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as

42. *He commanded, &c.* See Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15; Luke xxiv. 47, 48. ¶ *Ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* The phrase *quick and dead* occurs in only two other places in the Bible, 2 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Pet. iv. 5. In these places, it is usually interpreted to mean those who live on the earth, and those who have died. But I apprehend it may more properly be understood to mean those who have been quickened from moral death, and those who yet remain dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. ii. 1. And in this view of the case, this passage may be regarded as equivalent to what is expressed more at large in John v. 20—30.

43. *Give all the prophets witness.* The prophets foretold the advent of the Messiah, described his character, and enumerated many things which he should do and suffer; and their predictions were remarkably fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. See Luke xxiv. 25—27, 44. ¶ *Remission of sins.* See note on Acts v. 31, where the same phrase is translated “forgiveness of sins.”

43. *The Holy Ghost fell, &c.* See note on Acts ii. 4. The same tokens were manifest in this case, as when the apostles and others received the gift of the Holy Ghost; for these Gentiles immediately began to speak with foreign tongues, ver. 46. “This was a second confirmation of the entertainment of the Gentiles to the gospel, or a miracle added by God to the doctrine preached by Peter,—that nothing now was to be accounted common or unclean. For when God had poured the Holy Ghost upon the uncircumcised as well as upon the circumcised,—it was evidence sufficient that now God made no difference betwixt them. How these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit had been confined hitherto only to the nation of the Jews, it is not only clear by Scripture, but it is, upon that clearness, thought by the Jews that it must be confined thither ever; and that neither

any Gentile at all, nor hardly any Jew out of the land of Canaan, could be capable of them; and therefore when they here see the same measure, and fulness, and freeness of the Spirit upon the Gentiles as had been upon the Jews, they cannot but conclude the difference was in vanishing, and that God was setting up a church among them, when he bestowed the spirit of prophecy upon them.”—*Lightfoot*. It is worthy of remark, that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were imparted, in this case, before baptism; while, on all other recorded occasions, baptism preceded the gift. Probably this departure from the ordinary course of providence was designed to convince Peter and his associates, that the Gentiles, as such, were joint-heirs with the Jews of the heavenly inheritance, and to remove from their minds all scruples against receiving them into the Christian church. This effect was produced; and the other apostles also bowed in cheerful submission to the divine will, thus miraculously indicated. For when Peter urged this gift of the Spirit to the Gentiles as an incontrovertible argument that they were entitled to the privileges of the gospel, and were no longer to be regarded as unclean by the Jews, the other apostles held their peace and glorified God, acknowledging that he had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life. Acts xi. 15—18.

45. *Were astonished.* Not merely at this manifestation of the Holy Spirit; for they had frequently witnessed it before, and very probably had experienced the same spiritual influence. But they were astonished, that the Gentiles should receive this gift, which they had heretofore supposed belonged exclusively to the Jews. See note on ver. 44. So strongly rooted was this prejudice in the minds of the Jews, that nothing short of miraculous evidence could remove it. Had Cornelius and his friends professed, ever so solemnly, that they believed in Jesus as the true

many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to

Messiah, and that they felt the love of God shed abroad in their souls, it is not probable that "they of the circumcision" would have been convinced that the Gentiles were placed on an equality with themselves. They would still have insisted that the gifts of the Spirit were the portion of the Jews only. Hence the miraculous operation of the Spirit became necessary. And even this evidence did not produce a general conviction upon the minds of the whole Jewish church of believers; for, years afterwards, we find Paul laboring earnestly to convince them of the same fact; namely, that the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles is utterly broken down, and that God regards all his children with equal affection.

46. *Speak with tongues.* See note on Acts ii. 4. This was an undeniable evidence that they had received the Holy Ghost. ¶ *Magnify God.* Praise God; ascribe glory to him.

47. *Can any man forbid water, &c.* Can any one object against receiving these persons into the visible church, by the rite of baptism? Such appears to be the import of the question. Peter was overpowered by the evidence divinely exhibited; he felt that he should be guilty of withstanding God, by refusing baptism to those upon whom he had poured the miraculous gift of his Spirit. Acts xi. 17. But knowing, from personal experience, the strength of Jewish prejudices, and not knowing precisely what impression had been produced on the minds of his companions, he called on them to offer their objections, if any they had, against baptizing the converts at once, and thus receiving them to full and entire fellowship.

48. *Commanded, &c.* It does not appear why Peter did not himself baptize Cornelius and his household. Perhaps, like Paul, he considered it his

be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

## CHAPTER XI.

AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

duty to preach rather than baptize, 1 Cor. i. 14—17; and preferred that this service should be performed by some one of the "six brethren" who accompanied him from Joppa. From the circumstances of the case, it appears probable that sprinkling or pouring, rather than immersion, was the mode of baptism. ¶ *Certain days.* Probably, only a few days; for Peter would seem to have visited Jerusalem very soon after the other apostles heard of the astonishing event which had occurred in Cesarea. Acts xi. 1, 2.

## CHAPTER XI.

1. *The apostles and brethren, &c.* Not only the private members of the church, but the apostles themselves, were astonished, when they heard that "the Gentiles had also received the word of God," and that Peter had admitted them into the visible church. Intelligence of such an astounding fact would pass rapidly from Cesarea to Jerusalem; for all would be amazed, and would speak of it as a wonderful event. The Jews, believers in Jesus as well as others, had confidently supposed, up to this time, that, although the Gentiles were to be blessed in Jesus, yet they should be so blessed, not in the character of Gentiles, but by first becoming Jewish proselytes. They believed that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the blessings of the gospel precisely as they had for ages been admitted to the privileges of the Mosaic dispensation; they must first become proselytes; and then, being regarded as Jews, they were considered entitled to equal privileges with native Jews. Though the apostles forbore to rebuke Peter for departing from the prescribed rule in this particular case, they did not decide the

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a

vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay, and eat.

general question until a subsequent period, and after a full argument. Acts xv. 1—29. Even after this decision, it remained an open question in the church, for many years; and it required the untiring and most energetic efforts of Paul to overcome the scruples of those who clung so fondly to the idea that all the divine blessings must be communicated through the Jewish people, and by means of a conformity to Jewish customs. The intelligence received from Cesarea, under such circumstances, naturally occasioned an excitement in the church at Jerusalem. Of its character and progress, we have an account in the succeeding verses.

2. *They that were of the circumcision.* That is, the Christians who had been formerly Jews; so called, not to distinguish them from other Christians in Judea, for there were then none other; but in contrast with the uncircumcised Gentiles, who had been recently received into the church by Peter at Cesarea. ¶ *Contended.* They opposed him; charged him with having been guilty of improper conduct.

3. *Thou wentest in, &c.* See note on Acts x. 28. It is to be observed that this charge relates only to what was regarded by the Jews as unlawful intercourse with the Gentiles; yet Peter defends himself as against the further charge of improperly admitting the Gentiles to full and entire Christian fellowship. Perhaps the minor charge was alleged, because entering the houses of Gentiles and eating with them was universally condemned by the Jews as unlawful; so that, if this fact were proved against Peter, it was supposed that his subsequent proceedings also must be pronounced unlawful and blameworthy. No particular rule had yet been adopted, in anticipation of the

supposed fault now for the first time committed. On the other hand, instead of attempting by a general argument to prove the lawfulness of social intercourse with the Gentiles, Peter recounted the series of miracles, which resulted in the admission of Cornelius and his household into the Christian church; justifying his conduct on the ground that his refusal to receive them would have been an act of opposition to the manifest will of God, ver. 17. It followed, that, if God acknowledged these Gentiles as his children, by bestowing on them the gift of the Holy Ghost, it could not be improper for Peter to acknowledge them as brethren, and to eat with them in their own houses. While, therefore, his argument may seem to have been directed, not against the charge alleged, but another of graver import, which was only implied, yet, in fact, it furnished a most full and conclusive defence against both.

4. *Rehearsed—expounded.* He related the events which had occurred, and explained the import of the miracles, as impressed on his mind. When any person is accused, and is conscious of his own rectitude, a plain and unvarnished statement of facts usually furnishes his most effectual defence. Such was the course adopted by Peter. He acknowledged his former prejudices against the Gentiles, and his unwillingness to associate with them or to regard them as equals. He recapitulated the various circumstances which had led him, step by step, from his former to his present opinion, concerning the divine will, and the duty of Christians. And after this narrative and exposition had been given, it does not appear that a single word of dissatisfaction or discontent was heard, ver. 18.

5—14. See Acts x. 9—33.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him,

15. *As I began to speak.* Or while I was speaking. Acts x. 44. He had not proceeded far in his discourse, before the manifestation of the Spirit was witnessed. Acts x. 34—44.

16. *How that he said, &c.* See note on Acts i. 5. He remembered this declaration of his Lord, concerning the miraculous attestation of divine favor, which should be granted to true disciples. He was astonished to witness the token in the case of Gentiles; but he could not withstand and would not attempt to evade its force.

17. *Forasmuch then, &c.* Peter had related the circumstances accurately and distinctly; and "six brethren," ver. 12, stood ready to confirm his testimony. He now states the conclusion of the whole matter; submitting to his fellow-apostles, whether, as an honest man and a humble disciple of Jesus Christ, he could have refrained from the acts he had performed. ¶ *As God gave them, &c.* This was proof of acceptance, which it would be presumptuous to gainsay or resist. "This giving of the Holy Ghost, before baptism, contrary to the usual manner, seems to have been intended for a proof to the Jews there present, that God would have the Gentiles called into Christianity; and that what Peter had done, as

Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also

is said in ver. 23, &c., was by a divine appointment."—*Pearce*. ¶ *What was I, &c.* Peter did not hesitate to withstand and disobey the Jewish rulers, when their commands interfered with what he regarded as his duty. But when God commanded, or plainly indicated his will, the bold and impetuous apostle became conscious of his weakness and comparative insignificance. He humbly acknowledged his obligation to obey without questioning or resistance. ¶ *Could withstand God.* Or, able to withstand God. This question carries its own answer with it. It is idle to struggle against the manifest will of God. It is preposterous to claim, as some weak misguided men claim, ability to counteract the purposes of God, and to prevent the execution of his designs. It does not betoken Christian humility, when a man says he obeys God as a matter of choice, but could just as easily, if he pleased, resist his authority and prevent the accomplishment of his will.

18. *They held their peace.* "Rather, they were quieted or appeased, having before contended with him."—*Pearce*. The word is used in a somewhat similar sense, 1 Thess. iv. 11: in Luke xiv. 4, it indicates remaining silent when a question had been proposed; in Luke

to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

19 ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution

that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

xxiii. 56, resting from labor; and in Acts xxi. 14, the cessation of weeping and remonstrating. These are all the instances of its use in the New Testament. Perhaps the precise fact asserted is, that they *ceased* to accuse or chide or contend with Peter; and from that fact it may naturally be inferred that they were appeased and became quiet. ¶ *Glorified God.* Praised God. They were not content to keep silence, and refrain from further complaints; but they gave audible expression of their joy and thankfulness that God had manifested his grace to the Gentiles. ¶ *Then hath God, &c.* *Repentance unto life* is that repentance or reformation which is sincere and permanent, resulting in virtue and happiness, which is the highest kind of life. This is that "repentance to salvation, not to be repented of," 2 Cor. vii. 10. "The great truth is in this manner established, that the doors of the church are opened to the entire Gentile world; a great and glorious truth, that was worthy of this remarkable interposition. It at once changed the views of the apostles and of the early Christians; gave them new, large, and liberal conceptions of the gospel; broke down all their long-cherished prejudices; taught them to look upon all men as their brethren; and impressed their hearts with the truth, never after to be eradicated, that the Christian church was founded for the wide world, and opened the same glorious pathway to life, wherever man might be found, whether with the narrow prejudice of the Jew, or amidst the degradations of the pagan world. To this truth we owe our hopes; for this, we should thank the God of heaven; and, impressed with it, we should seek to invite the entire world to partake with us of the rich provisions of the gospel of the blessed God."—*Barnes.* Doubtless this great truth was thus established; and the apostles, and the disciples present with them, were satisfied that the Gentiles were included in the covenant of grace. For this, they rejoiced and gave glory to God. It is nevertheless true, that their Jewish prejudices, in part, continued

subsequently to influence their minds; and they considered it necessary for the Gentile converts to be circumcised, and to conform to the other requisitions of the Mosaic code. Hence the frequent controversies between Paul and others; and hence the solemn hearing and decision of the question by the apostles. Acts xv. 1—29. But it was one great point gained, that they should be fully satisfied that it was lawful to associate freely with the Gentiles, and preach to them; and that they might be truly converted and admitted as members of the church, *before* they conformed to the law of Moses, whatever might be regarded as their duty after conversion and admission.

19. *Scattered abroad.* That is, driven out from Jerusalem, and compelled to flee to distant regions for the preservation of their lives. It is worthy of observation, how frequently the crafty are taken in their own craftiness. The measures adopted in Jerusalem were intended to crush the church, by destroying some and intimidating others; they resulted in its enlargement, by sending messengers of the gospel through various lands, who, as they travelled, made known the riches of divine grace, and gained many converts. ¶ *Persecution—about Stephen.* See Acts viii. 1. ¶ *Phenice.* This territory, lying on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, is sometimes called Canaan, and properly comprehended the territories of Tyre and Sidon. See note on Matt. xv. 22. ¶ *Cyprus.* See note on Acts iv. 36. ¶ *Antioch.* There were two cities of this name; one is distinguished as "Antioch in Pisidia," Acts xiii. 14; the other, the capital of Syria, which is here intended, situated near the mouth of the river Orontes, was long the most powerful city of the East. It was founded, or first made a considerable place, by Seleucus Nicanor, about the year 300 B.C., who called it Antioch in honor of his father Antiochus. It became the residence of the ruling princes, both Syrian and Roman. Many privileges were granted to this city by successive Roman emperors. But it experienced sad reverses by wars

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

and by earthquakes, being frequently besieged and sacked, and several times shaken by earthquakes; in one of which, A.D. 588, more than sixty thousand persons perished. It "is now called Antakia; and till the year 1822, it occupied a remote corner of the ancient enclosure of its walls; its splendid buildings being reduced to hovels, and its population living in Turkish debasement. At that period it was revisited by its ancient subterranean enemy, and converted by an earthquake into a heap of ruins. It contains now about ten thousand inhabitants." It was in this city that the disciples of Jesus first received their distinctive name of *Christians*, ver. 26. The apostles devoted much time and care to the establishment of a church here, and from hence ministers of the word went forth. The bishop of Antioch is styled Patriarch, and has great influence in the Greek church. See Calmet. ¶ *To none but unto the Jews only.* These brethren had not heard that God had owned the Gentiles as children of the covenant, and consequently they confined their ministrations to the Jews; or if they had learned the fact, not knowing all the circumstances of the case, their Jewish prejudices were not overcome.

20. *Cyprus and Cyrene.* See notes on Acts ii. 10; iv. 36. One of the Cyrenians here mentioned was probably Lucius, named in Acts xiii. 1. Barnabas, who was of Cyprus, did not arrive at Antioch until a later period, ver. 22. Whatever were their names, these preachers were probably foreign Jews, sometimes called Hellenists; for they were among the number scattered abroad from Jerusalem, ver. 19; Acts viii. 1; yet up to that time none had been converted but Jews, either native, or foreign, or Jewish proselytes. The Greek language was spoken in Cyprus, and probably in Cyrene also; hence these preachers were well qualified to address those to whom that language was familiar. ¶ *Grecians.* The word here used generally denotes foreign Jews, or Jews by descent, born in for-

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 ¶ Then tidings of these things

eign lands. See note on Acts vi. 1. But, instead of *hellenistas* (ἑλληνιστᾶς), Griesbach, Knapp, and many other critics, read *hellenas* (ἑλλήνας), which properly signifies Greeks, by which general name all who were not Jews are frequently designated in the New Testament. See Rom. i. 16; x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 22—24. The context strongly indicates that this is the true reading. In ver. 19, it is said that certain disciples preached to the Jews only; but these, who were of Cyprus and Cyrene, are represented as preaching to another class of persons. But the Hellenists were Jews by descent, and could scarcely be regarded as a different class, requiring special mention. On the contrary, the Greeks were distinct from the Jews, not by birth only, but by blood; and if the gospel were preached to them, it would justify this special notice, as nothing of the kind had previously occurred in that region. It is supposed that the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, before they arrived at Antioch, had received intelligence of the events in Cesarea; and that they considered themselves authorized, by the example of Peter, to preach the gospel to Gentiles as well as to Jews. Subsequently a controversy arose, whether the Gentiles, converted probably under this preaching, were bound to observe the law of Moses. Acts xv. 1.

21. *Hand of the Lord, &c.* See note on Luke i. 66. By this phrase is indicated the divine assistance and guidance, enjoyed by the heralds of the cross in Antioch. Probably many of them were enabled to speak with tongues, and to perform other miracles. ¶ *Turned unto the Lord.* Forsook their idols, and worshipped the only true God; renounced sin, and obeyed the holy commands of God. See Acts xxvi. 18.

22. *Tidings of these things, &c.* The church at Jerusalem received intelligence that many converts had been made at Antioch, both of Jews and of Gentiles. Such an accession of believers was the more cheering, as it was made in an important city, whence a



came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

mighty influence might be exerted upon a wide region. ¶ *And they sent, &c.* Chiefly, as it would seem, to ascertain the facts, and to encourage the faithful in well-doing, ver. 23. ¶ *Barnabas.* See note on Acts iv. 36, 37. As Barnabas himself was a Hellenist, a Jew of Cyprus, he was peculiarly fitted for the mission assigned him. It is not unlikely that he was already acquainted in Antioch, which was not far distant from Cyprus.

23. *Seen the grace of God.* Witnessed the manifestation of divine grace or favor, in the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles. ¶ *With purpose of heart.* Or a hearty purpose, a firm and steadfast resolution. These converts at Antioch, like the other early Christians, and indeed like all Christians in all places, were liable to temptations arising from the open opposition or secret machinations of their adversaries. They were exhorted, therefore, to settle it as a firm purpose, a purpose not to be shaken by either flattery or persecution, that they would adhere to the profession and practice of the faith they had embraced, at whatever present inconvenience or hazard. ¶ *Cleave unto the Lord.* Adhere to him, as faithful disciples and loyal and obedient subjects.

24. *For he was a good man.* The word here used may be understood to mean pure and virtuous, or kind-hearted, benevolent, affectionate. In whichever way understood, it is natural that such a one should be glad to witness the saving influences of divine grace, and should rejoice that the Gentiles were made partakers with the Jews in the enjoyment of the blessing. Such a one also, by his strict integrity, or his kind and affectionate conduct and persuasions, would exert a happy influence on unbelievers, and induce them to yield a willing ear to the truths he imparted. And this may account, in part at least,

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year

for the success which attended his ministry in Antioch and elsewhere. ¶ *Full of the Holy Ghost.* See note on Acts vii. 55. He had received abundantly that spiritual influence which guided and sustained the apostles and other early ministers of the word, and his heart had thereby been purified and sanctified. ¶ *And of faith.* His faith was firm. He believed on the Lord Jesus Christ with undoubting assurance. The qualifications mentioned in this verse, benevolence, purity, piety, and unwavering faith in God and in his Son, are not only distinguishing characteristics of a true Christian, but indispensable requisites to the permanent success of a Christian minister. Dazzling talents, like the blazing meteor, may attract attention for a time; a hypocritical pretence of love, and faith, and sanctity, may deceive; but nothing short of honesty and sincerity, in the Christian virtues and graces, will ensure success, or deserve the blessing of God. ¶ *Much people.* Many persons; an obsolete form of expression. ¶ *Was added unto the Lord.* Were converted, or enrolled their names among the worshippers of God, according to the gospel.

25. *To Tarsus.* Whither Saul went from Jerusalem. Acts ix. 30. ¶ *To seek Saul.* For what purpose, the historian does not state distinctly: it may be safely inferred, however, that Barnabas desired Saul's assistance in the ministry. He found an effectual door opened in Antioch, for the promulgation of the gospel. He knew the former zeal and success of Saul. He desired that a strong impression might be made in this important city, as a wide influence on the surrounding country might thus be exerted. Hence he called to his assistance that chosen servant of God, whose miraculous conversion and subsequent successful ministry he already knew. See Acts ix. 27.

26. *A whole year.* Special attention

they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27 And in these days came

was devoted to large cities by the apostles. Thus Paul preached in Corinth a year and a half, and in Ephesus three years. Acts xviii. 11; xx. 31. One obvious reason for extraordinary exertions to establish churches in such cities may be found in the fact, that they are places to which many strangers from distant places resort, for business or pleasure; through whom an influence may be exerted, by a central church, on far remote regions and a vast multitude of people, who might otherwise remain long ignorant of the truth. ¶ *They assembled.* Met for public worship and mutual instruction and edification. ¶ *Were called Christians.* Received this as their distinctive appellation. It is not stated whether the disciples took this name upon themselves, or whether it was given them by others, or, if so, for what purpose. It is generally supposed, and with much probability, that this name was given by the Greek or Gentile inhabitants of Antioch; not as a term of honor or reproach, but merely as a distinctive name, importing disciples of Christ; just as the name *Pythagoreans* denoted disciples of Pythagoras; or *Platonists*, disciples of Plato; or *Epicureans*, disciples of Epicurus. That the name was not given by the apostles, or adopted voluntarily by the disciples, appears probable from the fact that it is used only in Acts xxvi. 28, and 1 Pet. iv. 16: while the general designation is disciples, or brethren, or believers, or the church, or saints. Nor is it probable that the name was given by the Jews; for they well knew that the Greek *Christ* had precisely the same import as the Hebrew *Messiah*; and therefore disciples of Christ and disciples of the Messiah would express the same idea. But they professed to wait for the Messiah, and would not willingly acknowledge others as his disciples. The name which they gave to the disciples was *Nazarenes*, Acts xxiv. 5; a name of bitter reproach and derision. But by whomsoever given, and for whatever purpose, this appellation became a term of reproach among the enemies of

prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be

Christ, and so continues to this day. At the same time it became a badge of honor to all true disciples, and so continues; for to be considered worthy to be called by the name of Christ is the highest honor to which man can attain on earth.

27. *In those days.* An indefinite term, whose meaning depends on the connection in which it is used. See note on Matt. iii. 1. It here means, during the time while Saul and Barnabas were preaching in Antioch. ¶ *Prophets.* This word often signifies religious teachers, whether or not possessing the power to foretell future events. See Matt. vii. 15; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28; xiii. 2, 8; xiv. 3, 5, 24. An important duty of the ancient prophets was to impart religious instruction: hence the name was appropriated to religious teachers generally. Even within the last two centuries, preaching was termed prophesying by some sects in England.

28. *Agabus.* Nothing is known of this person, except what is recorded here and in Acts xxi. 10, 11. He seems to have had his residence in Jerusalem; and, though not expressly called a Christian, may properly be so considered, as his intercourse with the disciples appears friendly. ¶ *Signified by the Spirit.* Predicted under the influence of the Spirit. He spake like the holy men of old, as he was moved by the Spirit. 2 Pet. i. 21. ¶ *Dearth.* Famine. See note on Acts vii. 11. ¶ *All the world.* See note on Luke ii. 1. The word used here, though naturally denoting the habitable world, frequently has a limited signification. It seems here to denote the land of Judea particularly; for the first step taken by the disciples in Antioch in reference to the predicted famine was to send relief to their brethren in Judea, ver. 29. ¶ *Which came to pass.* As the history was not written until after the prediction was accomplished, the historian very naturally notices the fact, as an evidence that the prediction was inspired. ¶ *In the days of Claudius Caesar.* *Cesar* is omitted by Griesbach, and marked as doubtful

great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea.

30 Which also they did, and sent

it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

## CHAPTER XII.

NOW about that time, Herod the king, stretched forth

by Knapp. In the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius, though of only thirteen years' duration, from A.D. 41 to A.D. 54, four different famines are recorded. That here foretold is supposed to be the same which Josephus mentions, as happening at a time when queen Helena visited Jerusalem. "Now her coming was of very great advantage to the people of Jerusalem; for whereas a great famine did oppress them at that time, and many people died for want of what was necessary to procure food withal, queen Helena sent some of her servants to Alexandria, with money to buy a great quantity of corn, and others of them to Cyprus, to bring a cargo of dried figs. And as soon as they came back, and had brought these provisions, which was done very quickly, she distributed food to those that were in want of it, and left an excellent memorial behind her of this benefaction, which she bestowed on our whole nation"—*Antiq.* B. xx., ch. ii., § 5. In anticipation of this season of distress, the disciples at Antioch sent relief, according to their several ability.

29. *The disciples.* The historian continues to use this term, notwithstanding the name Christians had begun to be used at Antioch. It had not probably become general, when the history was written. ¶ *According to his ability.* Some more, and some less, according to the means they possessed. This is the only true measure of generosity: the two mites offered by the poor widow was a more generous and a more praiseworthy donation, than the silver and gold cast into the treasury by her rich neighbors. Mark xii. 41—44. ¶ *To send relief.* This act was prompted by that benevolent spirit, and that brotherly regard for the welfare of others, which is so strongly inculcated and enforced by the precepts of our Master. Instances of the same kind are often mentioned in the New Testament.

Rom. xv. 25—27; 2 Cor. ix. 1, 2; Gal. ii. 10. ¶ *In Judea.* This indicates that the famine was of limited extent. See note on ver. 28.

30. *To the elders.* Or, to the presbyters. This term is sometimes applied to the ministers of churches; but such seems not to be its meaning here. "The word literally denotes *aged men*; but it was a name of office only in the Jewish synagogue. It is clear, however, I think, that the elders of the Jewish synagogue are not here included; for the relief was intended for the 'brethren,' ver. 29, that is, the Christians who were at Jerusalem; and it is not probable that a charity like this would have been intrusted to the hands of Jewish elders. The connection here does not enable us to determine any thing about the sense in which the word was used. I think it probable that it does not refer to *officers* in the church; but that it means simply that the charity was intrusted to the *aged*, prudent and experienced men in the church, for distribution among the members. Calvin supposes that the apostles were particularly intended. But this is not probable. It is possible that the *deacons*, who were probably aged men, may be here particularly referred to; but I am rather inclined to think that the charity was sent to the aged members of the church without respect to their office, to be distributed according to their discretion."—*Barnes.*

## CHAPTER XII.

1. The scene changes again to Judea; and in this chapter are related several events, in which the apostles and the church at Jerusalem were particularly interested. ¶ *About that time.* That is, about the time when Barnabas and Saul went up to Jerusalem with the alms sent by the disciples at Antioch, Acts xi. 29, 30. The phrase is indefinite, and may indicate a period prior to

his hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

the visit of Saul and Barnabas, or the period while they were at Jerusalem. As neither of them is mentioned in this connection, it is not unlikely that the events here narrated occurred before their arrival at Jerusalem. ¶ *Herod the king.* This Herod, otherwise called Agrippa, was son of Aristobulus and Mariamne, and grandson of Herod the Great, mentioned in Matt. ii. 1. He is sometimes styled Agrippa the Elder, or the Great. He was father of the Agrippa before whom Paul made his memorable defence, Acts ch. xxvi. He is said to have been born about three years before our Saviour's birth. After his father's death, he was sent by his grandfather to Rome, where he received an education befitting his rank, and where he made himself useful and agreeable to the emperors Caius and Claudius; the latter of whom bestowed on him the government of Judea, and some of the neighboring provinces. The appointment was acceptable to the Jews, and he retained the government, with the title of king, about seven years. Some of the means adopted by him to retain the favor of the people, and his singular and miserable end, are related in this chapter. ¶ *Stretched forth his hands.* Used his power. ¶ *To vex.* To oppress, or to injure. The word *kakōsai* (*κακῶσαι*), literally signifies *to do evil*. ¶ *Certain.* Disciples; certain persons, who are subsequently mentioned or referred to.

2. *Killed James, &c.* One of the sons of Zebedee, and an apostle of the Lord Jesus. He and his brother John, here named, were surnamed Boanerges, or sons of thunder. See note on Matt. x. 2. He is generally styled James the Greater, to distinguish him from the other James, called the Less, who seems to have presided in the council of apostles at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 13—29. He was the first of the apostles who suffered martyrdom. And to this tragical death our Lord is supposed to refer in Matt. xx. 23. ¶ *With the sword.* Probably James was not pierced through with the sword, but beheaded; as beheading was one form of

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread.

ignominious punishment among the Jews.

3. *Because he saw it pleased the Jews.* The Jews were very impatient under the foreign yoke, and were unwilling to submit to any governor holding authority from Rome. Agrippa, or Herod as he is here called, being of Jewish descent, and anxious to overcome the prejudices of his countrymen against foreign rule, adopted many of the customs of the Jews, and was ready even to commit iniquity to secure their favor. In this he succeeded to a considerable extent. Josephus says of him, that he "was by nature very beneficent, and liberal in his gifts, and very ambitious to oblige people with such large donations; and he made himself very illustrious by the many chargeable presents he made them. He took delight in giving, and rejoiced in living with good reputation. He was not at all like that Herod who reigned before him; for that Herod was ill-natured and severe in his punishments, and had no mercy on them that he hated; and every one perceived that he was more friendly to the Greeks than to the Jews. But Agrippa's temper was mild, and equally liberal to all men. He was humane to foreigners, and made them sensible of his liberality. He was in like manner rather of a generous and compassionate temper. Accordingly he loved to live continually at Jerusalem, and was exactly careful in the observance of the laws of his country. He therefore kept himself entirely pure; nor did any day pass over his head without its appointed sacrifice."—*Antiq. B. xix.*, ch. vii., § 3. This description, it should be remembered, is by a Jew; one who firmly adhered to the law of Moses, and cherished a fixed antipathy against all that interfered with it. Of course, he would not consider it disreputable in Herod to vex and destroy the Christians, if he punctually conformed to the Mosaic ritual; indeed, it was praiseworthy, rather than otherwise, in the opinion of Jews; because he thus manifested a desire to crush all opposition to their cherished institutions. He seems to

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of

soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

have been ambitious of popular favor, as well as of authority; and, like many other office-holders, was unscrupulous in the means adopted to accomplish his selfish purposes. Thus he beheaded James, presuming it would please the Jews, who most cordially hated the Christians. And, perceiving that he had not misjudged their temper, he was ready to proceed still further to gratify them, looking all the while at the personal benefit to accrue to himself from their approbation. ¶ *To take Peter also.* He was ready to sacrifice another apostle, to please them; and accordingly caused him to be imprisoned. The Jews had already endeavored to close the mouth of this apostle, by threatening, imprisoning, and scourging. Acts iv. 18, 21; v. 18, 40. But all their efforts had been vain. With indomitable courage, Peter persisted in obeying God rather than men, Acts v. 29, and continued to proclaim to both Jews and Gentiles salvation through Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah. Doubtless, the sacrifice of this prominent apostle of the new faith would have been even more agreeable to the Jews, than those other sacrifices which, as Josephus says, Herod ceased not to offer daily. ¶ *Days of unleavened bread.* The time of the passover. See note on Matt. xxvi. 2. The feast of the Passover continued seven days; and as, during the whole period, all leaven was carefully excluded from the houses of the Jews, the festival was frequently called the days of unleavened bread.

4. *He put him in prison.* He would not shock the religious feelings of the Jews so far as to proceed to trial and execution, during this solemn festival; for blood-thirsty as they were, they were fastidiously scrupulous as to times and seasons. When Jesus was crucified, they could not endure that his body should remain on the cross upon their Sabbath, and accordingly desired to hasten his death. John xix. 31—34. And Herod may have expected additional favor from the Jews, as a scrupulous observer of their religious solemnities, by keeping Peter in prison until the end of the feast. ¶ *Four quaternions of soldiers.* A quaternion

consisted of four soldiers: the whole number, therefore, was sixteen. The night being divided by the Romans into four watches, one quaternion, or four soldiers, would be on duty at once. Of these, two seem to have been in the cell with Peter, to whom he was bound with chains, ver. 6; while the other two kept guard at the door. ¶ *Easter.* Rather, the Passover. The original *pascha* (πάσχα) is the same which is used in Matt. xxvi. 2, and in very many other places, where it is rendered Passover. In this case only is the word *Easter* used; and here it conveys an entirely wrong idea. The festival observed in many churches, in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord, and called Easter, was not instituted until long after the Acts of the Apostles had been written. The passage, as translated, might lead some to suppose that Herod had regard to a festival of which he never heard, and which, indeed, did not then exist, instead of that great feast of the Jews which, for some cause, he was accustomed to observe with scrupulous exactness. The term *Easter* is said to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon, in which language it was the name of a goddess, supposed to be the same as the Venus of the Romans. When the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity and renounced idolatry, they gave the name of Easter to the Christian festival which corresponded so nearly, in point of time, with that to which they had long been accustomed. Bede, usually styled the "venerable Bede," one of the earliest ecclesiastical historians, whose history was published A.D. 731, says: "Eostremonath, which is now called the Paschal month, had its name from a goddess called Eostre, and to whom at that time they used to celebrate festivals."—*Richardson.* Clarke, after his manner, says, "Perhaps there never was a more unhappy, not to say absurd translation, than in our text. Every view we can take of this subject shows the gross impropriety of retaining a name every way exceptionable, and palpably absurd." ¶ *Bring him forth to the people.* Namely, for public execution; as the use of the phrase and the con-

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night

unction in which it occurs manifestly indicate.

5. *Prayer was made without ceasing.* Ardent, earnest prayer. The word rendered *without ceasing* is found in but one other place in the New Testament, 1 Pet. iv. 8, "Have  *fervent*  charity among yourselves." It seems to denote the earnestness and fervency of prayer, rather than its perpetual continuance. ¶ *Of the church.* By the church. They had no other means of affording assistance to their imprisoned associate. Resistance to the ruling powers was useless, if their principles would have allowed it. Appeals to the compassion of Herod would have been equally vain; for, desiring to  *please the Jews* , sooner than release Peter, he would have imprisoned all who interceded for him, and put them all to death together. In their extremity, they sought aid where the righteous never seek it in vain. They appealed to the Supreme Controller of events, in full faith that he would hear and bless them, in his own way, if not in theirs. They seem, however, to have prayed for divine support and consolation, in this season of affliction, rather than for Peter's immediate restoration to liberty; for they were much astonished, when they heard that he was no longer in prison, ver. 15.

6. *When.* Namely, at the end of the feast. See note on ver. 4. ¶ *Would have brought him forth.* That is, to be executed. ¶ *The same night.* Manifestly indicating the night immediately preceding the day designed for execution. The translation by Wakefield, if less literal, is more perspicuous. "Now, the very night before Herod intended to bring him forth, as Peter was asleep," &c. To the same effect is the translation of Haweis, who professes "to render every passage with the most literal exactness;"—"Now when Herod was going to bring him forth, the same night was Peter fast asleep," &c. Unquestionably, the phrase "was going to bring him forth," or "was about to bring him forth," is a more exact rendering of the original, than is the com-

Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light

mon version. ¶ *Peter was sleeping.* It is generally supposed that Peter slept, because his mind was composed, and his confidence in God was steadfast. Knowing the intention of Herod to destroy his life, he was so fully reconciled to whatever God might appoint, that he slept quietly as a child. Although this is probably the true view of the case, yet it should not be disguised that prisoners and other persons have slept, and slept soundly, under far different circumstances. See note on Matt. xxvi. 40. ¶ *Between two soldiers bound with two chains.* A usual method of securing a prisoner, in ancient times, was to fasten his hand or arm by a chain to the hand or arm of the soldier to whose custody he was committed. This not only prevented a secret escape, but rendered any escape almost impossible. Peter seems to have been doubly guarded; being thus chained to both the soldiers, — his right hand to the left hand of one, and his left hand to the right hand of the other. ¶ *Keepers before the door.* As a quaternum, or four soldiers, constituted one watch, and two were in the prison, to whom Peter was chained, there remained two to guard the door, and watch that none approached the prison for unlawful purposes. See note on ver. 4. All the circumstances here named combine to show that every precaution was taken to prevent the escape of the prisoner; and that a rescue by other persons, without knowledge of the guards, was utterly impossible. Admitting Peter to have been imprisoned, as here described, it is perfectly manifest that nothing short of a miracle could deliver him without alarming the guards. It is altogether incredible that four Roman soldiers, on duty, should fall into a natural sleep at the same time; since it is well known that the penalty for sleeping on one's post was death. That penalty seems to have been inflicted on these soldiers, ver. 19, even though their sleep, if they slept, was not a natural sleep.

7. *The angel of the Lord.* See note on Acts v. 19. The circumstances of

shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself; and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

the case require us to believe that this was a celestial visitant. No human agent could by any possibility have effected the deliverance here described, without the intervention of as great a miracle as is involved in the mingling of celestial beings in terrestrial affairs. ¶ *Came upon him.* Approached him; was present with him; a phrase frequently used in this sense even in the present day. ¶ *A light shined.* Some have imagined that the deliverance of Peter was effected by lightning, which melted the chains from his hands, stunned his keepers, opened the prison door, and produced this *light*. The supposition, however, appears too unreasonable in itself, and irreconcilable with the facts in the case, to deserve any grave attention. The appearance of angels is generally represented as effulgent, and their apparel as bright and shining. Of the angel at the sepulchre, it is said, "his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." Matt. xxviii. 3. This may account for the appearance of light, which very probably was seen by no human eyes except Peter's, when he awoke. ¶ *Smote Peter on the side.* Aroused him with a gentle blow, or pressure. ¶ *His chains fell off.* Being sundered miraculously, and so silently as to disturb none, and even to leave Peter in doubt whether the whole scene were not a vision or dream, ver. 9.

8. *Gird thyself.* The outer garment was laid aside, on retiring to rest, or thrown loosely over the body for a covering. The girdle which confined the inner coat or tunic was also either loosed or laid aside, for the sake of convenience and more free respiration in sleep. The command, therefore, was equivalent to saying, *Dress thyself.* ¶ *Bind on thy sandals.* See note on Matt. iii. 4. The sandals worn in the East are secured to the feet by straps or thongs of leather, or something of

9 And he went out, and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out,

like character. These also had been laid aside, and were now to be fastened. ¶ *Cast thy garment about thee.* That is, the outer garment, sometimes worn loosely, like a cloak, as in this instance, and sometimes secured about the body, like the inner garment, with a belt or girdle. The whole command required Peter to array himself, with his entire apparel, in the ordinary manner.

9. *Wist not.* Old English, for *knew not*. ¶ *That it was true.* That it was actual. It seemed impossible that he was really delivered from prison. ¶ *Saw a vision.* Either that he was dreaming, or that the whole scene was unreal and figurative, like that which he witnessed in Joppa, when praying on the house-top. Acts x. 10—16. The whole transaction was so surprising, that, while he might regard it as prophetic of what should afterward happen, he could not now regard it as real.

10. *The first and second ward.* Some understand this to mean the first and second soldier, standing as guards in the passage leading from the outer door to that part of the prison in which Peter had been confined. Pearce gives a different interpretation, which others prefer: "The first and the second prison, as the Greek word is rendered in ver. 4, 5, 6. The first was the inner prison, as it is called in Acts xvi. 24." ¶ *Iron gate, &c.* The principal gate of the prison; probably a gate partially or wholly covered with plates of iron, for greater security against violence. ¶ *That leadeth unto the city.* Or into the city. It has been conjectured, with some probability, that the prison was constructed in the wall, or one of the towers connected with the wall of the city; so that the door of the prison opened directly upon the street, and literally gave admission *into the city*. ¶ *Of his own accord.* Or, in our idiom, of *its* own accord; spontaneously, so far as any physical force was concerned.

and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from

The same power, which loosed or sundered the shackles from Peter's hands, caused the door to turn on its hinges, the fastening having been in like manner removed. ¶ *Through one street.* As far as was necessary to enable Peter to recover somewhat from his surprise, and to regain so much composure and self-possession as to be able effectually to improve the opportunity given him for escape. He was then left to rely on his own energies, as in former times.

11. *And when Peter was come to himself.* Or, had recovered the full use of his reason. He had been amazed and bewildered. The scene appeared unreal: he thought it might be a vision. At length he became fully conscious of its reality; he felt himself to be free. The description is perfectly natural, and commends itself at once to belief. ¶ *Of a surety.* Certainly; or of a certainty. On reflection, he felt fully assured of a divine interposition on his behalf, well knowing that no human power could have wrought the wonders he had witnessed. ¶ *All the expectation of the people of the Jews.* From this it appears, not only that Herod designed to destroy Peter to gratify the Jews, ver. 3, but that his intention had been made known, and that they earnestly expected this gratification.

12. *When he had considered, &c.* Finding himself at liberty, the first inquiry, naturally suggested, was how he should dispose of himself; whether he should flee from the city, or endeavor to secrete himself in it. He well knew that Herod would seek for him, ver. 19, and that the Jews would gladly apprehend him, if found. This was the first question which engrossed his mind, after he had acknowledged the divine favor. ¶ *He came to the house, &c.* He decided, first of all, to relieve the anxiety of his friends, and inform them of his safety. ¶ *Mary.* She was sister to Barnabas. Col. iv. 10. From the fact that the house is called hers, it is

all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together, praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the

probable that the community of goods mentioned Acts ii. 44, 45, was not strictly literal. ¶ *John, whose surname was Mark.* Probably called John by the Hebrews, and Mark or Marcus by the Greeks and Romans. This person is generally supposed to be the same Mark who wrote the Gospel bearing his name. He was nephew to Barnabas, whom he accompanied on his travels, after the separation from Paul. Acts xv. 37—39. ¶ *Many were gathered together, praying.* See note on ver. 5. Undoubtedly Peter was remembered in their prayers; and fervent supplications were made, on his behalf, for divine aid and consolation. They remembered the testimony of the Psalmist: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Ps. lxxvi. 10. To God they appealed in their extremity, that the wrath of the Jews, though fostered and encouraged by Herod, might be so restrained, that the divine glory and the safety and prosperity of the infant church might be promoted. And though they seem not to have expected the blessing which was granted, ver. 15, yet it cannot be reasonably doubted that they trusted confidently in God that he would hear their prayers, and grant answers of peace.

13. *Door of the gate.* Rather, door of the vestibule or porch, as the same word is translated, Matt. xxvi. 71. Most of the Jewish houses were constructed with an apartment at the principal entrance, called a porch; see note on Matt. ix. 2. The outer door, which gave entrance to this apartment, is probably here intended. ¶ *Damsel.* A young maiden. ¶ *Came to hearken.* So insecure was the condition of the disciples at that period, and so liable were they to be surprised and apprehended by their enemies, that they naturally refrained from admitting any person to their houses, especially in the night, until they were satisfied concern-



door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

ing his name and intentions. Moreover, it was the common practice in the East for visitors to announce their names to the porter, before the door was opened. ¶ *Rhoda*. A Greek name, signifying a rose. The ancients frequently gave fanciful names to their children. "Many names of females were taken from flowers, herbs, and trees; as Susanna from the lily, Hadesa from the myrtle."—*Grotius*. A similar practice still prevails.

14. *Knew Peter's voice*. He announced his name probably; or, at the least, requested admission; and his voice was familiar to her ear. ¶ *Opened not the gate for gladness*. The description is very natural, and at the same time not such a one as a writer of fiction would probably adopt. He would more probably represent the apostles as praying especially for Peter's deliverance, and as so strongly expecting a miraculous interference in answer to prayer, as to have posted Rhoda at the door to admit him on his arrival. Instead of this, she is here represented as so surprised and overjoyed at this unexpected blessing, that in her almost frantic paroxysm of joy, she ran immediately to inform the brethren assembled, leaving Peter in the street; which is far more consistent with the probable state of facts.

15. *Thou art mad*. Or, insane. So little did they expect the deliverance of Peter, that, instead of crediting the damsel's assertion that he was then at the door, they supposed her excessive grief and anxiety had unsettled her reason. ¶ *It is his angel*. She persisted in her affirmation with so much positiveness, that they were satisfied she had heard a voice like Peter's; but they supposed the appearance of an angel, in his form and with his voice, to be more credible than his deliverance from prison and appearance in his own person. The Jews imagined that every human being

16 But Peter continued knocking. And when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren.

had a guardian angel; see note on Matt. xviii. 10; and to that opinion there is here a manifest reference. It may seem singular, at first sight, that they did not go to the door, to ascertain whether Peter was actually there, instead of discussing the probability of the fact. Yet, when their state of mind and all the circumstances of their condition are considered, I apprehend their conduct will not appear unnatural.

16. *Peter continued knocking*. The knocking at length roused them to action, and they opened the door. ¶ *They were astonished*. They no longer doubted his identity; but they were overwhelmed with astonishment at his unexpected deliverance. As yet, they were necessarily ignorant of the miracle wrought; and they could scarcely believe the evidence of their own senses, when they saw him before them, at liberty and unharned.

17. *To hold their peace*. Probably the assembled disciples were expressing their joy more loudly and tumultuously than prudence would justify. The voice of Peter would not have been heard by them all, unless he raised it to such a pitch as to increase the clamor in the effort to drown it: he therefore attracted their attention by a significant movement of his hand. He desired them to be quiet and silent, for two reasons especially. He was apprehensive that any unusual noise in the house might be overheard, and lead to the apprehension of the whole company; and he desired, as speedily as possible, to inform his friends what great things God had done for him, and then depart into a more secure place, expecting that a strict search would be made for him as soon as his absence from the prison should be discovered. ¶ *The Lord had brought him*. He attributed his deliverance, not to an arm of flesh, but to the divine power miraculously exerted;

And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

and he gave this information to his brethren, so that they might both be relieved from anxiety for his personal safety, and be grateful to God for his protecting care. ¶ *Go, show these things unto James, &c.* It would seem the apostles were not present at this meeting; but Peter desired that they might be speedily informed of this new manifestation of divine favor to the disciples of Jesus. The James here mentioned was James the Less, called "the Lord's brother," Gal. i. 19. James the Greater, the son of Zebedee, had already been put to death, ver. 2. From the fact that Peter names this apostle particularly, when sending a message to all the apostles and brethren then in Jerusalem, he is supposed to have been the presiding officer of the church. And his own language and conduct, as related in Acts xv. 13—29, seem to justify that supposition. ¶ *Went into another place.* Namely, to a more secure place. Various conjectures have been offered concerning the place to which he retired. Rome, Cesarea, Galatia, have been severally named. But the historian has not designated the place, and no conjecture has hitherto been supported by very satisfactory evidence. It is sufficient that he went where Herod did not find him; and his life and his valuable services were prolonged for many years.

18. *As soon, as it was day.* Peter must have been delivered from prison during the last watch, or the last quarter of the night, if, as is generally supposed, the watch was changed four times; for his absence was not known until morning; unless it be supposed that the two soldiers, who occupied the cell with him, remained through the whole night, while only the outer guard was changed. ¶ *No small stir.* Great amazement and confusion. The escape of their prisoner was unaccountable; and, moreover, the soldiers well knew the penalty of their apparent negligence was death.

19. *Sought for him, &c.* Possibly, as some suppose, made search throughout

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and *there* abode.

the city. But the more probable meaning is, he sought for Peter, or sent for him, at the prison, with the intention to bring him forth for execution. He would not delay examining the keepers, until he had searched the whole city. ¶ *Examined the keepers.* Namely, those who had charge of Peter. He investigated the matter closely, to ascertain, if possible, by what means the prisoner had escaped. He would have been unwilling to believe that God had interposed by miracle, on behalf of Peter; and, indeed, it is not probable the keepers could give him any information, as they themselves were unconscious of his escape, by *any* means, until morning. They could only say he had gone; but how, or whither, they knew not. ¶ *Be put to death.* This was the usual penalty for negligence of duty, on the watch, in the Roman army. They suffered the same punishment as if they had aided in the escape, or slept on their post, and thus given opportunity for escape. ¶ *Went down from Judea to Cesarea, &c.* How soon after the deliverance of Peter, Herod went to Cesarea, does not appear. No further act of hostility against the church is recorded. Perhaps the demonstration already made, in the sacrifice of James and the intended and attempted sacrifice of Peter, was considered sufficient to secure the friendship of the Jews. Or perhaps the political cares of his kingdom so fully occupied his attention, that he found no leisure to engage in further persecutions. Cesarea, the place to which he removed, was a royal residence; but Herod had highly pleased the Jews by spending much of his time in Jerusalem. At length he returned to Cesarea, and *there* abode until his death, which occurred, as it would seem, within a year after his removal. Josephus says that Herod died "in the seventh year of his reign; for he reigned four years under Caius Cæsar; three of them were over Philip's tetrarchy only, and on the fourth he had that of Herod added to it; and he reigned, besides those, three years under the reign

20 ¶ And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon. But they came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.

21 And upon a set day, Herod

of Claudius Cæsar. In which time he reigned over the forementioned countries, and also had Judea added to them, as well as Samaria and Cesarea." He says, also, that when he "had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower; and there he exhibited shows in honor of Cæsar," &c. —*Antiq. B. XIX. ch. viii. § 2.* Hence it appears that he reigned three full years before Judea was added to his government, and three years over Judea, before his final visit to Cesarea, making at least six years in all; yet he died in the seventh year of his reign. It follows that he lived less than a year after his removal to Cesarea. And from the account given by Josephus, his death seems to have followed almost immediately after his removal. See note on ver. 23.

20. *Was highly displeased.* Or, was hostile; meditated war. The cause of his displeasure is not known. It has been conjectured that it was occasioned by some conflict in commercial interests; but this is only conjecture. ¶ *Tyre and Sidon.* Cities in Phœnicia, bordering on the Mediterranean. See note on Matt. xi. 21. ¶ *They came with one accord.* That is, by agents or deputies. The two cities, probably in concert, as they had a common interest in the matter, sent ambassadors to him, desiring peace, and endeavoring to appease his anger. ¶ *Blastus, the king's chamberlain.* Nothing is known of this individual, except, as here recorded, that he was a confidential officer of the king, having great interest with him. ¶ *Because their country was nourished, &c.* Phœnicia, in which Tyre and Sidon were situated, comprehended only a narrow strip of country on the shore of the Mediterranean, and depended chiefly on commerce for support. As the back country, from which their supplies would most naturally be drawn, was under the government of

arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a shout, saying, *It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he

Herod, his country might properly be said to nourish theirs; and, by withholding the customary supplies, he had power to distress them. This dispute between Herod and the men of Tyre and Sidon is not mentioned by Josephus, perhaps because he considered it too trivial to have a place among the more important political events of that stormy period. But it is properly introduced by Luke, in connection with the miserable death of an individual, who had made himself notorious as the first who slew an apostle of the Lord.

21. *Upon a set day.* A day previously assigned for the ceremony. ¶ *Royal apparel.* The dress is particularly described by Josephus. See note on ver. 23. ¶ *Made an oration unto them.* Addressed them at some length. The subject of his oration is nowhere recorded. Probably he recounted the injuries alleged to have been received by him, and closed by announcing his intention to forgive the past, and return to the former state of peaceful intercourse with the offending cities.

22. *The people gave a shout.* It has been customary, from time immemorial, to express extravagant joy, by loud shouts of applause. ¶ *It is the voice of a god, &c.* The Jewish portion of the audience probably did not unite in this deification of Herod; as it savored too much of idolatry, which was prohibited by their law under such tremendous penalties. But the Gentiles were ever ready to ascribe divinity to any great benefactor. See Acts xiv. 11—13. Though Luke does not mention the fact, it appears that Herod did not check this improper language of the people, but rather took pleasure in it. See note on ver. 23. It was even a graver crime in a Jew to allow himself to be called a god, than to give that appellation to another.

23. *The angel of the Lord smote him.* The messenger of the Lord, namely, a deadly disease, manifested itself in him

gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

immediately. It is not unusual in the scriptures to call a disease, or any thing else which is commissioned to accomplish a divine purpose, an angel. "It is not intended that there was a miracle in this case; but it certainly is intended by the sacred writer, that his death was a divine judgment on him for receiving homage as a god."—*Barnes*. ¶ *Because he gave not God the glory.* Because he did not direct the attention of the people to a higher power than himself, as the source of all their blessings; because he allowed them to pay him that kind of homage which is due to God only. Matt. xix. 17. ¶ *He was eaten of worms.* The disorder of Herod seems to have been similar to that which destroyed the life of his grandfather, and of Antiochus Epiphanes. Jos. B. xvii., ch. vi. § 5; 2 Maccabees, ch. ix. It was a disease of the intestines; and, in the putrefaction which ensued, worms came forth from the living carcass, as from the dead. Probably the paraphrase of Doddridge gives a tolerably correct view of the case:—"He was presently forced to quit the place in extreme torture; and being miserably eaten and tormented (as his grandfather, Herod the Great had been) with a vast number of small worms, which bred in his bowels, and rendered him a most nauseous and horrible spectacle to all about him, he expired in equal agony and infamy; sunk as much below the common state of human nature, as his flatterers had endeavored to raise him above it." The account given by Josephus, concerning the manner of Herod's death, is strongly confirmatory of this by Luke; varying as little as could be expected, when it is considered that Herod was a popular ruler among the Jews, endeavored to please them even by deeds of cruelty and blood, ver. 3, and had a friend for his biographer, who was desirous to exhibit his character in the best possible light. He tells us that Herod exhibited shows at Cesarea, in honor of Cæsar, at which "a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of which shows, he put on a garment

24 ¶ But the word of God grew and multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul re-

made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another (though not for his good), that 'he was a god;' and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us; for though we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature!' Upon this, the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterward looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him; and fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, 'I, whom ye call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept of what Providence allots, as it pleases God; for we have by no means lived ill, but in a splendid and happy manner.' When he had said this, his pain was become violent. Accordingly he was carried into the palace, and the rumor went abroad everywhere that he would certainly die in a little time. And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age."—*Antiq. B. XIX. ch. viii. § 2.*

24. *The word of God grew and multiplied.* Great success attended the gospel, and the number of believers rapidly multiplied. The death of James had a tendency to dishearten the disciples; but the subsequent miraculous deliverance of Peter, in connection with

turned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

the remarkable death of Herod, which soon followed, encouraged and reassured them. They spake the word with freedom and boldness; and many converts became the seals of their faithful ministry.

25. *Returned from Jerusalem.* Namely to Antioch, whence they went up to Jerusalem, to carry alms to their suffering brethren, Acts xi. 29, 30. ¶ *John, whose surname was Mark.* See note on ver. 12. From this period, Mark became the companion of Barnabas, for a long season; and afterwards, as is supposed, wrote the history of our Lord's life, precepts, promises, and conduct, which bears his name.

### CHAPTER XIII.

From this point, the history relates almost exclusively to the labors, and trials, and success of the great apostle to the Gentiles. Whether his labors were deemed of more importance in themselves; or whether the propagation of the gospel among the Gentiles was thought to require a more circumstantial history, inasmuch as it was of such vital interest to themselves, so distasteful to the Jewish nation, and so exciting to the scruples even of the Jewish Christians; or whether Luke is so much more full in this part of his history, because he was the companion of Paul, and an eye-witness of the larger portion of the events narrated, — or for whatever other reason, — certain it is, that much the larger portion of this history, and almost the whole of what follows, is devoted to transactions with which Paul was personally connected. The church, as narrated in the preceding chapters, had survived two persecutions, after the crucifixion of its founder; one which arose about Stephen, and the other commenced by Herod. The first was checked by the conversion of the chief persecutor, Saul of Tarsus; and the other, by the miserable death of the king himself. In both cases, a divine interposition was manifest, — disheartening to the persecutors, and full of promise and encouragement to

### CHAPTER XIII.

NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch certain

the church. Thus far, the promise of their Master had been verified, that not even the gates of hell should prevail against them. Matt. xvi. 18. This chapter opens with the record of a transaction, which indicates more perfect confidence in final success than the disciples had previously manifested. Hitherto, their labor had consisted perhaps as much in endurance as in action. They had not voluntarily travelled, to any considerable extent, to proclaim the gospel among men; but had chiefly exerted themselves to sustain and encourage each other, and to teach those who willingly sought instruction. Such was their general custom, except when driven from one place to another by the violence of persecution. But we here find them leaving a city where they enjoyed peace and quietness, and undertaking a voluntary pilgrimage and mission among the Gentile nations. The relation of the events connected with this journey, which may without impropriety be styled the first Christian mission, is contained in this chapter and the next succeeding.

1. *Antioch.* The situation of this city was favorable for a wide diffusion of the gospel, by means of the multitudes which resorted thither from a distance, for traffic, or otherwise. See note on Acts xi. 19. But the disciples were not content with the influence thus indirectly exerted. Accordingly they sent out special messengers of the gospel of the grace of God. ¶ *Prophets and teachers.* Religious teachers were frequently styled prophets. Matt. vii. 15. Many suppose that two distinct classes are here intended; but the distinction is not very clearly understood. Lightfoot expresses the opinion that only one class is designated: — "These offices, indeed, are distinguished, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Eph. iv. 11; but here they seem as if they were not so to be. For the church of Antioch was not yet arrived at that maturity that it should produce teachers, that were not endowed with the Holy Ghost and the gift of prophecy. According to the state of the church then being in that place, there were, nay it was necessary there

prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

should be, prophetic teachers, because there was not any who by the study of the scriptures was become fit for that office. But why, then, is it not rather said, 'prophetic teachers,' than 'prophets and teachers'? Namely, because there were prophets who were not ordinary teachers, but acted in their prophetic office occasionally only; and they were such as rather foretold things to come, than ordinarily preached or taught catechistically. But these were both prophets and constant preachers too." ¶ *Barnabas*. The same who had recently returned from Jerusalem. Acts xi. 29, 30; xii. 25. ¶ *Simeon, that was called Niger*. Who this Simeon was, or why he was called *Niger*, or the Black, we have no account; nor is he elsewhere mentioned in the scriptures. ¶ *Lucius of Cyrene*. Probably the same person who is mentioned by Paul, as one of his companions, Rom. xvi. 21. Cyrene was the birth-place of Simon, who was compelled to bear the cross of our Lord. See note on Matt. xxvii. 32. ¶ *Manaen*. This disciple is not named again in the history. ¶ *Which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch*. Not with Herod Agrippa, whose death is recorded in the preceding chapter, but with his father, Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. See Luke iii. 1. Manaen must have been advanced in years at this time; for Agrippa was in the fifty-fourth year of his age when he died, and with his father Manaen had been a companion or foster brother. Some have supposed he was allied to the royal family, by ties of blood; but it was not unusual, in former times, for noble or rich families to receive lads into their houses, as companions to their sons, and for the time being to treat them as children. But though Manaen had been thus tenderly brought up, and had probably received marks of royal favor in his mature years, he did not hesitate to become a partaker of the persecutions to which Christians were subjected. On the contrary, he not only believed and professed his faith in Jesus, but openly preached in his name. ¶ *And Saul*.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.

Though Saul was divinely commissioned as an apostle, he is here named merely as one of the prophetic teachers. As he is the last named, it is highly probable that all these teachers were filled with the Holy Ghost, and had the gift of prophecy. Had there been a difference between them, it is not probable that the higher class would be last named.

2. *Ministered to the Lord*. Were engaged in religious services; probably on one of the days set apart for fasting and prayer, either by the whole church, or by the teachers and officers. ¶ *The Holy Ghost said*. See notes on Acts viii. 26, 29. In what manner the impression was made on the minds of the disciples we are not informed. But, in some way, they were assured beyond doubt that God designed to employ Saul and Barnabas on a mission to the Gentiles. Saul had been informed, long before, concerning the divine purpose. Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Possibly he suggested to his brethren that the proper time had arrived when he should enter upon the work assigned him. And they may have felt a divine impulse confirming his suggestion. ¶ *Separate me Barnabas and Saul*. Set them apart. This is not to be understood as ordination, or consecration, either to the ministry or the apostleship; for both had been preachers for a long time, and Saul was ordained as an apostle by a much higher power than was vested in these disciples. Rom. i. 1—5; Gal. i. 1. But the purpose for which they were to be set apart by their brethren is specially stated. ¶ *For the work, &c.* That is, the work of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles in the region of Antioch, for a limited time, and to a certain extent. Although the precise time and extent of this mission are not here stated, they were evidently understood by the disciples; for when Saul and Barnabas returned from their journey, they reported what success God had granted them; and, with a distinct understanding that they had fulfilled the work specially assigned them, they remained a long time

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 ¶ So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Se-

with the disciples in Antioch. Acts xiv. 26—28.

3. *Fasted and prayed.* This may have been on the same day when they received an intimation of the divine will; but more probably, it was on a subsequent occasion, a time specially appointed for that purpose. The gospel had been preached to Cornelius and his family. Probably some Gentiles had been converted in Antioch. But this was the first mission undertaken for the purpose of a general proclamation of the gospel among the Gentiles. This was a very important event; one which was likely to be disapproved by many of the Jewish converts, and perhaps by some of the apostles; for it had not yet been decided by them, whether the Gentiles were to be admitted into the church, without previous conversion to Judaism, or a subsequent conformity to the Mosaic code. Saul had no doubt on this point; probably Barnabas had none; but not so all. It was natural, therefore, that the disciples should feel desirous to mark this event with religious services of peculiar solemnity, and in the most fervent manner unitedly to implore the divine blessing upon the enterprise. Doubtless their prayers were heard; and the two ministers of the word, thus sent forth, were the more confident of success, after this appeal on their behalf had been made by the whole church. ¶ *Laid their hands on them.* The laying on of hands, though used in ordination to the ministry, is not confined to that single purpose. It was used, from early times, when conferring a favor or invoking a blessing. Gen. xlviii. 14; Mark x. 16; Acts ix. 17. So here the disciples put their hands on the heads of their brethren, and invoked the blessing of God on them, and the enterprise they were about to undertake.

4. *Sent forth by the Holy Ghost.* That is, by divine direction. See ver. 2. ¶ *Departed unto Seleucia.* "A city of Syria, on the Mediterranean, near where the river Orontes falls into it."—*Calmet.* Antioch was situated on the same river, at some few miles' distance

leucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.

from the seacoast. As Barnabas and Saul appear to have visited this place chiefly or solely for the purpose of embarking for Cyprus, we may suppose it to have been the port of entry and departure chiefly used by the inhabitants of Antioch. ¶ *Cyprus.* This island, in the easterly part of the Mediterranean, about sixty miles from Seleucia, was the native place of Barnabas, Acts iv. 36. Its two principal cities were Salamis, ver. 5, and Paphos, ver. 6. The inhabitants were notorious for excessive luxury and debauchery. They were worshippers of Venus, who had a celebrated temple at Paphos. Hence the name Paphian goddess was sometimes given to Venus. Nevertheless, in the midst of this idolatrous and dissolute people, dwelt many Jews, who maintained the stated worship of God in their synagogues, ver. 5. Possibly, these missionaries of the cross first directed their steps to this place, on account of the acquaintance Barnabas had with many of the inhabitants. Moreover, the gospel had been previously preached here. Acts xi. 19. Here, however, their labors were chiefly directed to the conversion of Jews. It was not until they arrived at Antioch in Pisidia, that, being rejected and persecuted by the Jews, they announced their full determination to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; ver. 14, 46, 47.

5. *Salamis.* This was the chief city of the island, situated near its southeastern extremity, on the side towards the main land, and the port most easily accessible from Seleucia. At a later period this city was called Constantia. ¶ *Synagogues of the Jews.* The first proclamation of the gospel, here as elsewhere, was made to the Jews; partly because they were at first regarded as the chosen of God, and peculiarly interested in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, and partly because the Jews, with all their bigotry and exclusiveness, permitted even strangers to speak freely in their synagogues. See ver. 15. ¶ *They had also John to their minister.* Or, for an attendant or assistant. This was the same John, or Mark,

And they had also John to *their* minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false

who is named in Acts xii. 12, and generally supposed to be identical with Mark the evangelist. He did not travel with Barnabas and Saul, as their equal; and probably did not attempt to preach in public. He was rather an assistant in temporal matters, their whole attention being devoted to things spiritual. The historian gives no information concerning the effects which resulted from this visit to Salamis, whether or not any converts were made to Christianity.

6. *Gone through the isle.* The distance from Salamis to Paphos, which was at the opposite extremity of the island, is supposed to have been not much less than two hundred miles. The journey appears to have been made by land; in all probability, on foot; and although the historian, in his rapid narrative, does not mention the fact, it may be reasonably supposed that Saul and Barnabas did not travel thus far in silence, but, as they went, they preached, and taught the people concerning Jesus. ¶ *Paphos.* This city was situated at the western extremity of the island. Here was a splendid temple to Venus, afterwards destroyed by an earthquake, in which the rites called religious were of the most debasing and infamous character. To these rites may be applied, with a slight variation, the language of Paul, Eph. v. 12: It is a shame even to speak of those things which were done openly by the dissolute and profligate worshippers of the goddess, and devotees of debauchery. This city was the residence of the "deputy," ver. 7, or the Roman governor of the island. ¶ *Sorcerer.* Or, more literally, a magician. See note on Acts viii. 9. ¶ *False prophet.* See note on Matt. vii. 15. One who professed to be a religious teacher, and probably pretended to be inspired, and able to foretell future events. ¶ *Bar-jesus.* That is, son of Jesus or Joshua. Bar is a Syriac word, signifying son. See Matt. xvi. 17. *Jesus* — or, in the Hebrew language, *Joshua* — was a common name among the Jews.

7. *Deputy of the country.* "The

prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Bar-

original is 'proconsul.' It was the custom of the Romans, after the accession of Augustus to the empire, to divide their provinces into two classes; one of which belonged to the emperor, and was under the administration of officers called *propretors*, but the other to the senate and Roman people, and was governed by *proconsuls*. Cyprus had been a propretorian province; but it had been transferred, before the present time, as also Narbonese Gaul, to the senate, and the presiding officer was therefore called a *proconsul*, as in the text; for a coin has been discovered containing an inscription employing the very same title of proconsul in relation to Proclus, who next succeeded Sergius Paulus in the government of this island. An ancient inscription, in the time of Caligula, the predecessor of Claudius, the present emperor, also styles Aquilius Scaura *proconsul* of the province of Cyprus. The accuracy of Luke, therefore, in applying this title to the ruler of the island, is triumphantly vindicated, and he is proved to be thoroughly acquainted with the facts which he related. These incidental proofs carry with them the greater weight, because they are incidental." — *Livermore.* ¶ *Sergius Paulus.* Nothing is known of this individual, except what is here recorded. The office which he held was usually conferred on the nobility, or persons of senatorial rank. His conduct, as here exhibited, indicates a willingness to become acquainted with religious truth. ¶ *Prudent.* The word used here ordinarily means intelligent, cautious, wise. In this case, it has been suggested that it may mean *candid*; indicating the willingness of Sergius to hear and embrace the truth, whenever presented. ¶ *Called for Barnabas and Saul.* They had doubtless preached in Paphos. Sergius heard of them as preachers of a new doctrine, and desired to know what they taught. Instead of obtaining his information, as too often happens, through others, who might either ignorantly or intentionally misrepresent the facts, he adopted the much wiser and



nabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to

more *prudent* method of hearing their message from their own lips. ¶ *Desired to hear the word of God.* It is not probable that he described it as the word of God, or the gospel; indeed, there is no evidence that he had any accurate conception of the doctrine which they taught. The meaning is simply this: he desired to hear their doctrine. The historian, knowing that their doctrine was the gospel, so describes it, when mentioning the desire of the governor.

8. *Elymas the sorcerer.* Or, the magician. Elymas is generally understood as the interpretation, not of the name Bar-jesus, ver. 6, but of the epithet magus, magician, or sorcerer. Lightfoot, however, expresses a different opinion. "I suppose this sorcerer was called, in his own Hebrew name, Bar-jesus, and went by that name among the Hebraizing Jews; but amongst those that spake Arabic, Elymas; which, in the Arabic tongue, signifies the same thing. I confess it is something unusual for St. Luke to render a Hebrew name by Arabic, and not by Greek, which the evangelists commonly do. But it seems that this magician was born and bred in some place or country, where the Arabic was the mother tongue, inhabited by Jews also, that used their own language; and from thence he came to be known by this twofold name." ¶ *Withstood them.* Contradicted and opposed them. He had the same motive for so doing, which induced the Jews to oppose our Lord,—that is, supposing him to have really believed the doctrines which he taught. He knew, if Barnabas and Saul were believed, as teachers of truth, he himself would be discredited as a propagator of falsehood. His popularity was at stake, and perhaps his means of living also; and men, in all ages, have struggled even to desperation, rather than be deprived of these. But if he were a downright impostor, as there is good reason to believe, he still foresaw the same result, if the gospel should be believed. His imposture would be exposed, himself disgraced, and his means destroyed of sponging a

turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

dishonest living out of the community. Hence he used his utmost exertions to prevent the governor and others from believing the doctrine preached by Saul and Barnabas, contradicting what they asserted, and, as it would seem, *perverting* the doctrine, ver. 10, perhaps alleging that it was licentious, or that it involved unhappy consequences. ¶ *To turn away the deputy from the faith.* Not to induce him to renounce a faith formerly cherished, as the phrase is capable of being understood; for he had not yet embraced the gospel proclaimed in his hearing, ver. 12. The meaning is, Elymas endeavored to prevent the deputy from believing. He was unwilling to lose such an eminent patron, and still more unwilling that he should become a patron of Christianity; for this was not only utterly hostile to his magical arts, but was generally understood to involve the overthrow of Judaism in its own triumph; and he was both a magician and a Jew. Hence his anxiety to prevent the deputy from believing the word of the Lord.

9. *Saul, who also is called Paul.* The great apostle to the Gentiles is here for the first time called Paul, and for the last time, Saul. The two names belong to different languages, and are of different signification. Saul is Hebrew, and signifies *sought, requested, demanded*. Cruden gives, as a further signification of the name, "ditch, sepulchre, death, or hell." This signification it may have, from its relation to *Sheol*, the grave, or hell; the primary signification of which is *to crave, or demand*: it swallows up all. Paul, or in its native form Paulus, is Roman or Latin, and signifies *small, or diminutive*. Various conjectures have been offered to account for this change of name. Some have supposed it was made in compliment to the Roman proconsul, he being the first eminent Roman converted under the ministry of this apostle. But to this it is objected, that the office of Paul was actually much more important than that of the deputy, and that the greater would not probably

10 And said, O full of all subtilty, and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all

righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

pay this compliment to the less. The principal argument in favor of the conjecture is, that the conversion of Sergius Paulus is mentioned in close connection with this change of name. Nor can the name be supposed to have been changed in consequence of his own conversion; for the historian continues to call him uniformly Saul, for a long time after that event. The following solution seems as natural as any that I have seen, and is generally adopted by modern commentators. "I think Beza's account of the matter most easy and probable; that, having conversed hitherto chiefly with Jews and Syrians, to whom the name of Saul was familiar, and now coming among Romans and Greeks, they would naturally pronounce his name Paul; as one whose Hebrew name was Jochanan would be called by the Greeks and Latins Johannes, by the French Jean, by the Dutch Hans, and by the English John. See also Grotius *in loc.* Beza thinks the family of this proconsul might be the first who addressed or spoke of him by the name of Paul."—*Dodbridge*. Grotius, in the place referred to, notices the changes which other names have undergone in passing from one language into another; as Jesus to Jason, Hillel to Pollio, Onias to Menelaus, Jakim to Alcimus, Silas to Sylvanus, Pasides to Pansa, Diocles to Diocletianus, Biglinitza to Vigilantia. But by whomsoever this change was made in the name of the apostle, and for whatever reason, the change itself was permanent. The name Saul is not again applied to him; but henceforth he is denominated Paul, — a name dear to the hearts of Gentile Christians throughout Christendom; a name which will be honored, while clear perception of the truth, and a zealous defence of it, combined with purity of heart and life, continue to be honored. ¶ *Filled with the Holy Ghost*. See note on Acts ii. 4. He was enabled by the Spirit to detect the hypocrisy and iniquity of Elymas, and to foretell the visible judgment about to befall him. This is expressly mentioned by Luke, so that none should by possibility mistake the manner of spirit by which Paul was moved. ¶ *Set his eyes on*

him. Looked at him intently; regarded him with a steadfast gaze, and probably with some degree of severity and sternness.

10. *Full of, &c.* That is, very subtle and mischievous; see note on Acts ii. 4. *Subtilty*. Deceit, deception, craftiness. It is implied that Elymas was a voluntary deceiver; that he was not so much a fanatic or enthusiast, as a heartless impostor, wilfully practising upon the ignorant credulity of the people. ¶ *Mischief*. The original word, which is used nowhere else in the New Testament, is said to mean *facility of performing*, and is supposed by some to indicate legerdemain, or sleight of hand. Others suppose it to indicate the readiness with which he wrought evil. He had so long practised it, that it had become natural to him. In this sense, its meaning is not very unlike that in Eph. iv. 19. ¶ *Child of the devil*. Thoroughly under the influence of evil passions and propensities. See note on John viii. 44. "Such a phrase does not endorse the belief of the existence of the devil, as a species of Second Almighty, and predicate of Elymas a literal sonship to this malignant being; but it is popular language, fitted to convey, by a powerful illustration, Paul's abhorrence of the sorcerer, as if he was too bad a man to act simply under the guidance of his own heart, but was actuated by the reputed father of evil, the god of wickedness and sin."—*Liv-ermore*. ¶ *Righteousness*. Holiness, or goodness. A man, devoted to the practice of iniquity, not only undervalues and despises goodness, but generally is absolutely inimical to it. This idea is forcibly and quaintly illustrated by Barnes: "A man who lives by fraud will be opposed to the truth; a pander to the vices of men will hate the rules of chastity and purity; a manufacturer or vender of ardent spirits will be the enemy of temperance societies." ¶ *Wilt thou not cease to pervert, &c.* The question implies that Elymas had already perverted the *right ways of the Lord*, and seems to refer to the manner in which he withstood the preaching of the gospel, ver. 8. Perhaps he had misrepresented the preachers as hereti-

11 And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately

there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

cal Jews, apostates from the ancient faith, and worthy of stoning rather than of confidence; or perhaps he represented their doctrine as licentious, opening the gates of heaven to the Gentiles, who were so vile as never to have submitted themselves to circumcision and the other requirements of the Jewish law; or possibly he denounced Jesus as an impostor, and his gospel as a tissue of fraud and deception. It is manifest that, in some way, he endeavored to prevent the conversion of the *deputy* to Christianity, for which he was indignantly rebuked by the apostle. ¶ *Right ways.* Or, as Tyndal and Haweis translate it, "the straight ways." The ways of the Lord, or ways of truth, may well be denominated straight, in contrast with the crooked, tortuous ways of iniquity. The path of truth and uprightness is straight-forward, open, and direct; but he who walks in the path of sin and deception finds himself obliged to make frequent and short turns, and generally becomes bewildered in the intricate mazes of the labyrinth; he stumbles, too, not knowing what are the impediments in the way. Prov. iv. 19.

11. *The hand of the Lord is upon thee.* A common expression among the Hebrews, to denote either blessings or chastisements which appear to flow directly from God. It denotes blessings, 2 Chron. xxx. 12; Ezra viii. 18, 22, 31; Neh. ii. 18; Acts ii. 33. It denotes chastisements, 1 Sam. v. 11; Job xix. 21; 1 Pet. v. 6. In the latter sense, it is used here; and the particular kind of chastisement is specified. By the divine hand, or the miraculous operation of the divine energy, the natural vision of Elymas should be destroyed for a season, that he might realize the power of the God of Jacob, and cease to pervert his ways. ¶ *Thou shalt be blind, &c.* It is not said that Paul occasioned this blindness by the exertion of miraculous power. He foretold it, and the event verified the prediction. Yet the inspiration of Paul and the presence of the Holy Spirit with him were as fully manifest, as if the miracle had been wrought by him;

for he neither could have read the heart of Elymas nor foretold the punishment about to be inflicted on him, except by the influence and aid of the Spirit.

¶ *For a season.* For how long a season, we know not. It is an indication of the divine mercy that the blindness was not to be perpetual. The punishments inflicted by the Lord are designed, among other things, for the reformation of the offender. And perhaps nothing would more effectually humble the heart of a man like Elymas, than temporary blindness; which utterly incapacitated him from the practice of his deceptive arts, and made him feel his dependence on a higher power. Inflicted, as it was, in connection with the admonition of Paul, it must have convinced him that the God of Paul was a living God, a God of power. It was the opinion of the early fathers, on what definite ground does not appear, that the sorcerer was converted from his evil ways, and became a worshipper of that God whose servant he formerly withstood. ¶ *Immediately.* The event so quickly followed the prediction, that none could doubt the connection of one with the other. Nor could it be doubted that the blindness was a punishment for wickedness; for it was expressly so declared by the apostle, whose ability to predict the event fully manifested his guidance by the Spirit. ¶ *A mist and a darkness.* The cessation of sight was not instantaneous, though it began to fade out and become glimmering immediately after the solemn admonition of the apostle. His sight became obscured and extinct. So deep was the night which enshrouded him, that he could not even discern the sun. The incidental cause, if any, of this blindness, is not perceptible, as in the case of Saul: see note on Acts ix. 8. We can only regard it as miraculous, both in its primary cause and immediate antecedents. ¶ *Went about seeking, &c.* A picture of utter helplessness. His boasted superiority over the mass, and power to deceive them, had suddenly departed. Instead of deluding their sight, and amazing them by his feats, he was not able even to

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his com-

find his own home without assistance. It were well, if men who indulge pride, on account of the blessings they enjoy, would consider by what tenure they are held, and how easily and suddenly the Giver may take them away. Then would they be grateful for the gift and its continuance, rather than proud of its possession. See Jer. ix. 23, 24. Much more should he who abuses the blessings of divine providence, who employs his powers and faculties in deceiving and injuring his fellow-men, be admonished to turn them to better account, lest the judgments of God overtake him, and he be filled with darkness and woe.

12. *When he saw what was done.* When he witnessed the discomfiture of the sorcerer, in such a miraculous manner; when he witnessed the immediate fulfilment of the apostle's prediction of such an improbable event; when he witnessed such a manifest interposition of divine power on behalf of the apostle, and in condemnation of his perverse adversary; the effect was such as might have been expected, and such as the miracle was, partly at least, designed to produce. ¶ *Believed.* That is, he acknowledged Paul as a duly authorized messenger, and believed his testimony. He did not hesitate to place confidence in the declarations of a preacher, to whom was given such unequivocal tokens of divine approbation. ¶ *Being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.* "That is, at the doctrine of the Lord Jesus, which Paul then taught; or, at the doctrine which he taught concerning the Lord Jesus, when he saw it attended with such power. Agreeably to the latter of these two senses, we read in Heb. vi. 2, *baptismōn didachē* (βαπτισμῶν διδασκῆ), which signifies the doctrine concerning baptisms; and in 1 Tim. iv. 1, *didaskaliai daimoniōn* (διδασκαλίαι δαιμονίων), the doctrines concerning demons."—Pearce. The phrase is understood by some to indicate the deputy's astonishment at the purity and spirituality of the doctrine taught by the apostle; while others, with perhaps more probability, suppose the astonishment to have been

pany loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: And John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

chiefly occasioned by the miraculous testimony exhibited of its truth.

13. *Paul and his company.* Barnabas was associated with Paul in this mission, and Mark was their constant attendant, ver. 2, 5. Besides these, it is not improbable that some converts accompanied them, for the sake of obtaining more perfect knowledge concerning the gospel. ¶ *Loosed from Paphos.* Departed from Paphos. Their departure was by water, and the word *loosed* has a nautical meaning, in reference to loosing or casting off the fastenings by which the vessel had been confined in place, while in port. ¶ *Perga in Pamphylia.* Pamphylia was situated in Asia Minor, on the northern shore of the Mediterranean. The distance from Cyprus to Pamphylia was about two hundred miles, the way lying across the sea of Cilicia and the sea of Pamphylia. Perga was the chief city of Pamphylia, situated a few miles from the seacoast, on the river Cestus. When Pamphylia "was divided into two parts, this city became the metropolis of one part, and Side of the other. There was, on a neighboring mountain, a very famous temple of Diana, surnamed Pergæa, from the city."—*Calmet*. What success attended the apostolic labors in Perga, does not appear; nor indeed are we informed whether Paul and his associates made any effort to promulgate the gospel there, or whether they merely passed through the city, on their journey from Paphos to Antioch, in Pisidia, ver. 14. ¶ *John departing from them.* Whether induced by unwillingness to endure the perils and privations of a missionary enterprise, or by anxiety to attend the calls of business or friends, or by whatever other cause, this departure of John, or Mark, was highly disapproved by Paul; and he subsequently declined, very emphatically, to receive him again as a travelling companion. Acts xv. 37—40. At a later period, however, Paul became reconciled to him, probably because he had manifested satisfactory zeal and devotion; and he mentioned him in very affectionate terms, Colossians iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11

14 ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down.

15 And after the reading of the

as his fellow-laborer and useful assistant.

14. *Antioch in Pisidia.* The journey from Perga to this place, a distance somewhat less than a hundred miles, was performed by land. Pisidia was "a province of Asia Minor, lying mostly on Mount Taurus, and having Lycaonia on the north, Pamphylia on the south, Cilicia and Cappadocia east, and the province of Asia west."—*Calmet*. Antioch is said to have belonged to Pisidia, though it was actually embraced in Phrygia, which appears on the maps to have formed the northern boundary of Pisidia. ¶ *Went into the synagogue.* Here, as in most important cities, for a wide extent round about Judea, we find Jews; so many that they maintained a synagogue of their own. Into this the apostles first entered, according to their usual custom, to address the people. See note on ver. 5. ¶ *On the Sabbath-day.* Namely, the Jewish Sabbath, answering to our Saturday. Whether or not the custom of keeping the first day of the week as holy time, and devoting it to religious services, had so early become general among Christians, they were accustomed to unite with the Jews in their worship on the seventh day, whenever it was practicable. And then, and for a long time afterwards, it was customary, in every place, first to propose the gospel to the Jews for acceptance. Even though Paul announced his determination to turn to the Gentiles, ver. 46, yet at Iconium, the next city which he visited, he preached first in the synagogue of the Jews. Acts xiv. 1. ¶ *Sat down.* It is said to have been customary, in the synagogues, for the congregation to stand; and only the teachers were seated. The teachers sat even while they were teaching, but rose up to read or to pray. See note on Luke iv. 16. From the fact that Paul and Barnabas sat down, the rulers of the synagogue may have supposed them to be teachers of the law; and therefore invited them to address the people, ver. 15, notwithstanding they were personally strangers.

law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

15. *After the reading of the law, &c.* See note on Luke iv. 16. The allotted lesson for the day was first read, this being an indispensable service on the Sabbath. The law, that is, the five books bearing the name of Moses, was divided into portions, one of which was read on every Sabbath, in such manner that the whole law was publicly read in the compass of the year. The prophets were also read, in a similar manner, in convenient sections. It has been conjectured (though it is conjecture only), that the lessons for this day were Deut. ch. i., and Isa. ch. i. The reason offered for this conjecture is, that these two scriptures were assigned, by the rule, for one and the same day; and that, in ver. 18, Paul is supposed to refer to Deut. i. 31. Nevertheless, it is equally true that he referred to several other scriptures, even more distinctly, besides giving a general epitome of Jewish history, from the days of Abraham to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. ¶ *The rulers of the synagogue.* Those who had the general control of the synagogue, the direction of the form of worship, the management of the financial affairs of the church, and jurisdiction in civil affairs; or what may perhaps more properly be called the civil administration of the Mosaic law, extending to the infliction of stripes for a breach of law. See note on Matt. iv. 23. ¶ *Sent unto them.* Presuming they were desirous to address the people, from the circumstance that they assumed the posture of teachers on entering the synagogue. See note on ver. 14. ¶ *Men and brethren.* Literally, *men, brethren*. Though strangers, Paul and Barnabas were probably recognized as Jews, by their peculiar cast of countenance, which, in Jews, is strongly marked. They were acknowledged as brethren, and civilly requested to speak, if they had a word of exhortation for the people. Preaching and exhortation, though the proper province of the minister, was not monopolized by him, as in the ordinary services of the sanctuary, in the present day. When strangers or any well-dis-

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

posed persons were present, who desired to address the people, for instruction or edification, an opportunity was freely given. Luke iv. 16—22. This fact may account for what would otherwise seem unnatural or disorderly in the conduct of the apostles, who uniformly, in whatever city they happened to be, went freely into the Jewish synagogues, and spake to the people.

16. *Beckoning with his hand.* A gesticulation designed to attract and secure attention. See note on Acts xii. 17. ¶ *Men of Israel.* That is, Jews. The congregation seems to have consisted of both Jews and Gentiles; the latter class very probably being proselytes, and therefore regular worshippers in the synagogue. See ver. 42, 43. ¶ *Ye that fear God.* This phrase includes the Gentile proselytes. However firmly persuaded that they were the peculiar favorites of Heaven, the Jews acknowledged the proselytes from among the Gentiles to be entitled to a share in divine blessings; so that their prejudices were not excited, nor their national feeling shocked, by this introductory address of the apostle, notwithstanding it indicated that both Jews and Gentiles had a common interest in the subject of his discourse. ¶ *Give audience.* Listen; attend to my words. Greek, *hear ye*. In the address which follows, Paul exhibited not only the boldness and faithfulness of an apostle, but the wisdom of an orator. Of course, his main object was to preach Jesus, as the promised Messiah. But he well knew, if he announced his purpose abruptly, he would highly displease the Jewish portion of his audience, and encounter their decided opposition in advance. Very wisely, therefore, he commenced, by recounting briefly the dealings of God with their nation, as recorded in their own scriptures, in such a manner as to satisfy them that he religiously believed all which had been written by Moses and the prophets. He noticed particularly the promise of a Messiah, and thus directed their attention to his main subject. Having thus gained their confidence, and conciliated their feelings,

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and

he announced that the Messiah, whom they expected, had already appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, through whom they might expect the forgiveness of sins, and justification from those things from which the law provided no method of justification, ver. 32—39. So gently and so gradually did he approach the main subject of his discourse, that he secured a patient hearing; and the audience for that time manifested a disposition to ponder and reflect, rather than contradict and dispute.

17. *The God of this people of Israel.* He was truly the God of all the earth; but having long been worshipped by the children of Israel, while other nations were given to idolatry, he might properly be styled their God, in contradistinction to the gods worshipped by the Gentiles. ¶ *Chose our fathers.* Selected them as a peculiar people. From the time when he caused Abraham to depart from his country into a distant land, he had exhibited peculiar tokens of love to him and his posterity; fully performing the promise to make him a great nation, and to bestow blessings on his seed. Gen. xii. 1—3. ¶ *Exalted the people, &c.* Increased their numbers from a small band to a mighty multitude. Threescore and ten souls went down into Egypt, or threescore and fifteen, including the family of Joseph. There went up from Egypt six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty men of war, "from twenty years old and upward," besides women and children, and besides the whole tribe of Levi. Num. i. 45, 46. Moreover, the people were exalted from a condition of the most abject slavery to a state of freedom, being led forth from the house of bondage, and, after long wandering, conducted to the promised land, where they enjoyed peculiar privileges, and advantages every way; chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. Rom. iii. 1, 2. ¶ *When they dwelt, &c.* Their marvellous increase in numbers and strength was accomplished while they were in Egypt; their exaltation to freedom and to a higher degree of knowl-

with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty

edge may be dated from the hour of their deliverance from that house of bondage. ¶ *As strangers in the land of Egypt.* They dwelt there as strangers and foreigners. They never became incorporated with the ruling nation, as one of its component parts. They intermarried not with their oppressors. They went into Egypt as a separate people; and as a separate people they went out. With the single exception that Joseph probably married an Egyptian, and his posterity partook of her blood, it is not known that the Israelites left any relatives, either near or remote, in Egypt. ¶ *With a high arm brought he them out of it.* This phrase denotes great power. *Arm* figuratively denotes power. The reference is to the repeated miracles performed by Moses, at the divine command, the cutting-off of the first-born, without human instrumentality, and the utter destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, when pursuing the children of Israel. Truly did God deliver his people with a high arm, or an exhibition of tremendous, irresistible, overwhelming power.

18. *About the time of forty years.* The duration of their pilgrimage between Egypt and Canaan. Exod. xvi. 35; Deut. xxix. 5. ¶ *Suffered he their manners.* This passage has been variously interpreted. The most natural explanation would be, that God bore with their rebellious and disobedient conduct during their whole pilgrimage: and this would be consistent with the facts; for they were disobedient and rebellious, and yet God preserved them by a constant miracle, and bestowed daily blessings, prohibiting them only from inheriting the land of promise. Yet it is objected to this interpretation that it is inconsistent with the manifest purpose of Paul, in this portion of his address; as a reference to the former iniquities of the nation would naturally vex and exasperate his Jewish hearers, whose feelings he was endeavoring to conciliate. Most critics therefore concur in reading, He blessed and nourished them; or, He bore and fed them, as a nurse. This requires the change of only a single letter in the original,

years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed

which change, Griesbach and Knapp have admitted into the text upon satisfactory authority. This explanation also is perfectly consistent with the facts in the case; for, during the whole pilgrimage, the protecting care of God was exhibited, not only in the visible tokens of flame and smoke which accompanied them, but in the constant provision made for their temporal wants, the deliverance afforded in every hour of trial, and the instructions by which they were made acquainted with the character and will of God, and with their own duty towards God and man. ¶ *The wilderness.* The desert through which they passed, on their journey to Canaan.

19. *Destroyed seven nations.* The Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Josh. iii. 10. These nations were destroyed, that is, cut off or prostrated as nations. It is not intended that all the people were slain; for many were made captive, and some escaped even captivity. But, as nations, they were conquered and subdued; their political power was destroyed, and their physical force utterly crippled by the slaughter of vast multitudes. Their land was wrested from them, and was bestowed upon the conquerors. Some have suggested that such a war of extermination as that which led to this result is so inconsistent with the divine character and the eternal principles of right, that it cannot have been commanded by God. This objection is fairly stated and as fairly answered by Bishop Watson, in his Letter to Paine, or an Apology for the Bible. The importance of the subject will justify a full notice. "You hold it impossible that the Bible can be the word of God, because it is therein said that the Israelites destroyed the Canaanites by the express command of God; and to believe the Bible to be true, we must, you affirm, unbelieve all our belief of the moral justice of God; for wherein, you ask, could crying or smiling infants offend? I am astonished that so acute a reasoner should attempt to disparage the Bible, by bringing forward this exploded and

seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that, he gave unto

frequently refuted objection of Morgan, Tindal, and Bolingbroke. You profess yourself to be a deist, and to believe that there is a God who created the universe, and established the laws of nature by which it is sustained in existence. You profess that, from the contemplation of the works of God, you derive a knowledge of his attributes; and you reject the Bible, because it ascribes to God things inconsistent (as you suppose) with the attributes which you have discovered to belong to him; in particular, you think it repugnant to his moral justice, that he should doom to destruction the crying or smiling infants of the Canaanites. Why do you not maintain it to be repugnant to his moral justice, that he should suffer crying or smiling infants to be swallowed up by an earthquake, drowned by an inundation, consumed by fire, starved by famine, or destroyed by pestilence? The word of God is in perfect harmony with his works: crying or smiling infants are subjected to death in both. You will probably reply that the evils which the Canaanites suffered from the express command of God were different from those which were brought on mankind by the operation of the laws of nature. Different! in what? Not in the magnitude of the evil; not in the subjects of sufferance; not in the author of it; for my philosophy, at least, instructs me to believe that God not only primarily formed, but that he has through all ages executed, the laws of nature; and that he will through all eternity administer them for the general happiness of his creatures, whether we can, on every occasion, discern that end or not. As to the Canaanites, it is needless to enter into any proof of the depraved state of their morals: they were a wicked people in the time of Abraham; and they, even then, were devoted to destruction by God: but their iniquity was not then full. In the time of Moses, they were idolaters, sacrificers of their own crying or smiling infants; devourers of human flesh; addicted to unnatural lusts; immersed in the filthiness of all manner of vice. Now I think it will be impossible to prove that it was a pro-

ceeding contrary to God's moral justice to exterminate so wicked a people. He made the Israelites the executors of his vengeance; and, in doing this, he gave such an evident and terrible proof of his abomination of vice, as could not fail to strike the surrounding nations with astonishment and terror, and to impress on the minds of the Israelites what they were to expect, if they followed the example of the nations whom he commanded them to cut off. 'Ye shall not commit any of these abominations, that the land spue not you out also, as it spued out the nations before you.' How strong and descriptive this language! The vices of the inhabitants were so abominable, that the very land was sick of them, and forced to vomit them forth, as the stomach disgorges a deadly poison." The foregoing remarks are commended to the serious consideration of those who insist that human reason is the supreme tribunal at which the word of God must be tried and judged, and who insist also on their right to reject every thing which to them seems inconsistent with the views which they have formed concerning moral right and the divine character. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Rom. xiv. 22. It is the part of modesty, not to condemn in revelation that which is known and admitted to exist in nature.

¶ *Of Chanaan.* The whole land formerly occupied by the seven exterminated nations was called by the general name of Canaan. ¶ *Divided their land to them by lot.* See an account of the division, in Josh. ch. xiii.—xix. Questions even of much importance were frequently settled among the Jews by lot. See notes on Luke i. 9; Acts i. 26.

20. *Gave unto them judges.* Or, rulers. These were men, raised up by God, and endowed with such abilities for government, that their right to rule was readily recognized and acknowledged by the people. See Judg. ii. 16, 18. ¶ *About the space of four hundred and fifty years.* Chronologists have been much perplexed in the effort to reconcile this passage with 1 Kings vi. 1.



21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the

tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed

"And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord." But by adding together the forty years' pilgrimage in the wilderness, seventeen years for the government of Joshua, being the duration of his life after entering the land of promise, the four hundred and fifty years of the judges, and, according to the common chronology, forty years for the government of Samuel and Saul, forty years of David's reign, and the three of Solomon's, before the building of the temple was commenced, we have a sum total of five hundred and ninety years; being an excess of one hundred and ten years over the number specified in 1 Kings vi. 1. Lightfoot has a table, showing that, during the four hundred and fifty years which elapsed from the first appointment of judges to the death of Eli, the last of the number, Israel was actually governed by judges three hundred and thirty-nine years, and by foreign tyrants one hundred and eleven years. The period during which the nation was subjected to foreign rule varies only one year from the difference between the chronology of Luke and that in the Old Testament. May not the writer of the book of Kings have purposely omitted so many years from his computation? It is known that the Jews were exceedingly sensitive on the subject of foreign domination: so highly did they value political freedom, that they were unwilling to acknowledge they had ever been deprived of it. See notes on Matt. i. 17; John viii. 33. It is possible they were even willing to blot from memory the whole portion of their national existence, after their departure from Egypt, during which they were not able to name rulers of their own kindred. I am not aware that this suggestion has been made heretofore, with reference to this chronological difficulty; nor am I certain that it will abide the test of a severe scrutiny. But it is confessed, on all hands, that no other method, hitherto proposed,

affords a satisfactory solution of the apparent contradiction. And this, if fallacious, will only add one to the number of ineffectual attempts to reconcile the inconsistency between the chronology of Paul or Luke, and that which is found in the book of Kings. It is important, however, to add, that Josephus, the Jewish historian, agrees with the text, and disagrees with the other account, in this matter; and there is the strongest probability that the mistake is not in the text, but in the Old Testament. He says, "Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, on the second month, five hundred and ninety-two years after the exodus out of Egypt."—*Antiq. B. viii., ch. iii. § 1.* This, as appears by the preceding computation, agrees, within two years, with the account in the text. Hence it is evident that Paul's chronology was that which was then generally adopted. It should not be forgotten, however, that the apostle had a higher object in view than the settlement of points of chronology. It was sufficient for his purpose to refer to the former history of the nation as his hearers themselves understood it.

21. *They desired a king.* They became dissatisfied with the conduct of Samuel's sons, who had officiated as judges, and desired the appointment of a king, for the professed purpose of conforming their government to that of other nations, but actually, perhaps, to escape from subjection to these unpopular rulers. "All the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." 1 Sam. viii. 4, 5. Samuel forewarned them concerning the nature and effects of a kingly government; but they insisted, and, by divine direction, he yielded. It was originally designed that they should be subjected to this kind of government. Deut. xvii. 14, 15. ¶ *Saul the son of Cis.* Uniformly Kish, in the Old Testament. In transplanting Hebrew names into the Greek language, such alterations are not unusual. See note on Matt. i. 2. ¶ *Space*

him, he raised up unto them David to be their king: to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God,

*of forty years.* This is understood to include both the time while Samuel judged the people and the reign of Saul; in other words, the period from the four hundred and fifty years of the judges, ver. 20, to the death of Saul.

22. *When he had removed him.* Saul disobeyed a positive command of God; and hence the Lord rent the kingdom from him, and rejected him from being king over Israel. 1 Sam. xv. 24—31. He was defeated in battle, and, having vainly endeavored to persuade his armor-bearer to slay him, he committed suicide by falling on his own sword. 1 Sam. xxxi. 1—6. The removal of Saul, in the text, probably refers to the time when Samuel notified him that the Lord had rejected him as king, and rent his kingdom from him. David was anointed king very soon after this rejection of Saul, and the length of his reign is computed from that period.

¶ *Raised up unto them David.* Endowed him with remarkable abilities, and caused him to be anointed king, by express command. 1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13.

¶ *He gave testimony.* He testified. 1 Sam. xiii. 14; Ps. lxxxix. 20. ¶ *I have found David, &c.* This is not a literal quotation, but is rather the substance of several declarations. ¶ *A man after mine own heart.* This is to be understood of David, as a public officer, rather than of his moral character as an individual, as is indicated by the succeeding phrase. As a man, indeed, though not without failings and imperfections, yet compared with his contemporaries, he was remarkable for his purity of character. It should not be forgotten, that, however lamentably low may be the standard of morals now, it was much lower then. And if any man now should rise as far above the present standard as David then did, we should be ready to exclaim, Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright. David committed sin, as all men do. But few have repented and sorrowed so bitterly as he, if we may confide in his-

according to *his* promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24 When John had first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye

tory, or judge from his penitential Psalms. And his conduct through life, notwithstanding his occasional lapses, indicates that his governing principle was an honest and earnest desire to know and perform his whole duty. As much as this can be found in very few on earth: more than this need not be sought in any. ¶ *Shall fulfil all my will.* Saul had disobeyed the divine command, and he was cut off. It is testified, on the contrary, that David should fulfil the divine will. Both testimonies doubtless relate to the public or official character of the individuals. The language of the Lord, by his prophet, to Jeroboam, concerning David, clearly shows that he is mentioned as a king rather than as a private individual. "Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes. But thou hast done evil above all that were before thee; for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back." 1 Kings xiv. 8, 9.

23. *Of this man's seed.* That is, of the posterity of David. ¶ *According to his promise.* See note on Acts ii. 30. ¶ *Raised unto Israel a Saviour.* See note on Acts v. 31. ¶ *A Saviour, Jesus.* See note on Matt. i. 21.

24. *When John had first preached.* Namely, in the wilderness of Judea. See Matt. ch. iii. He came to prepare the way for the promised Messiah, and, by preaching repentance to the children of Israel, prepared their hearts to receive the expected blessing.

25. *And as John fulfilled his course.* While he was fulfilling his ministry; while he was engaged in the work assigned him. The labor of John is styled a course, or race, in allusion to the ancient games, in which running was one trial of strength and endurance. See Heb. xii. 1. ¶ *Whom think ye, &c.* According to the accounts given by the several evangelists, John gave this testi-

that I am? I am not *he*. But behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and who-

mony concerning himself and the Messiah whom he preached, in answer to the inquiries of the people, either expressed or understood. Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7, 8; Luke iii. 15, 16; John i. 19—27. The accounts substantially agree. The declaration of John, as recorded by three evangelists, that a personage would soon appear, mightier than himself, is equivalent to the distinct assertion recorded by the evangelist John, that he himself was not that personage. This testimony of John to the fulfilment of the ancient promise, in the person of Jesus, was not without its object and effect. However widely the Jews differed in opinion concerning this humble and zealous forerunner of the Lord, some supposing him to be the Messiah, some Isaiah, and some to be another of the ancient prophets, John i. 19—23, they all acknowledged his purity of life, and “all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed.” Mark xi. 32.

26. *Men and brethren.* A Hebraism, equivalent to the more simple form, *brethren*. All the congregation were included by the term brethren, and afterwards separately addressed. Having completed his rapid survey of Jewish history from the time when Abraham was set apart from the nations as the founder of a peculiar race, until the baptism of that Saviour whose advent the prophets had predicted, the apostle proceeds in the most easy and natural manner to the main object of his discourse; namely, to assure his hearers that they had a personal interest in the salvation preached through the Messiah, and to exhort them to embrace Jesus as the true Christ, and thus enter into the joy of their Lord. To this end, he adduced evidence of the great fact to be believed, and exhibited the consequences of faith and unbelief, ver. 27—41. ¶ *Children of the stock of Abraham.* Namely, Jews. The Ishmaelites were also descendants of Abraham; but the Jews had so long monopolized the name, that it was regarded as

soever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the

theirs by prescriptive right. ¶ *Who-soever among you feareth God.* Proselytes, who were not Jews by birth, but who had adopted their religion, and conformed to its requirements. See note on ver. 16. Lightfoot quotes from a Jewish Rabbini the following passage concerning proselytes:—“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways, Ps. cxxviii. 1. He doth not say, Blessed is Israel, or, Blessed are the priests, or, Blessed the Levites; but, Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord. These are the proselytes, they that fear the Lord. According as it is said of Israel, Blessed art thou, O Israel! so it is said of these, Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord. Now of what proselyte is it said, that he is blessed? It is said of the proselyte of justice. Not as those Cushites, of whom it is said, that they feared the Lord, and yet worshipped their own gods.” ¶ *To you.* To both Jews and proselytes. The Gentiles were as deeply interested as the Jews. Indeed, all Gentiles were thus interested, as this apostle subsequently testified, in terms too plain to be misunderstood. But here, the address is specially to the proselytes, none other of the Gentiles probably being in a Jewish synagogue for religious purposes. ¶ *The word of this salvation.* This message of salvation; namely, that God had sent his Son Jesus into the world, that the world through him might be saved; in other words, that he had sent him to save his people from their sins, to turn them away from their iniquities, and to give them eternal life. Matt. i. 21; John iii. 17; xvii. 2; Acts iii. 26.

27. *They that dwell at Jerusalem, &c.* The inhabitants of the holy city and their rulers were more guilty than others, in the transactions here referred to, because they had a better opportunity to learn the true character and doctrine of Jesus, and because they were more actively engaged in the murderous work of crucifixion. Probably not one of Paul's hearers, in a

voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

city so distant from Jerusalem, had been personally engaged in the persecution of our Lord. This fact is suggested by the apostle as a favorable consideration; yet he admonished them to beware, lest, by manifesting a similar spirit, they should become involved in a common calamity with their brethren, ver. 40, 41. ¶ *Because they knew him not.* "With great wisdom and tenderness, he speaks of his murderers in such a manner as not to exasperate, but as far as possible to mitigate their crime. There was sufficient guilt in the murder of the Son of God to overwhelm the nation with alarm, even after all that could be said to mitigate the deed. See Acts ii. 23, 36, 37. When Paul says, 'They knew him not,' he means that they did not know him to be the Messiah; see 1 Cor. ii. 8; they were ignorant of the true meaning of the prophecies of the Old Testament; they regarded him as an impostor."—*Barnes*. "They were, however, answerable for their ignorance; for, if they had not chosen darkness, they might have seen the true light. Obstinacy, prejudice, suppression of their real convictions, had plunged them into voluntary night."—*Livermore*. The example of our Lord and his apostles is worthy the consideration of those who are accustomed to rebuke the iniquity of the absent with unmeasured severity, while they allude to the vices of them who are present with the utmost tenderness, if they do not absolutely apologize for them. On the contrary, the apostles, when speaking of the absent as in the case now under consideration, used the mildest terms consistent with a conscientious declaration of the truth; but, like their Master and great exemplar, when dealing with the consciences of guilty men in their presence, they used the most plain, direct, and pungent terms,—sometimes taking the form of terrible denunciation. See Matt. xxiii. 13—39; John viii. 37—55; Acts ii. 22, 23; iii. 12—14; iv. 8—12; v. 29—32. Thus did they use severity where it might be beneficial, and omit it when it would be useless. ¶ *Nor yet the voices of the prophets.* The language of the prophets was familiar to their ears, for

28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

they heard it from Sabbath to Sabbath; but its meaning they had not learned. They were ignorant that even the death of Jesus was one characteristic mark of his Messiahship. His own disciples had been ignorant, until they were particularly instructed by him. See Luke xxiv. 19—27. The Jews expected an earthly prince, and were not prepared for a heavenly; they expected one who would reign on earth for ever, and did not dream that he would pass through the grave to glory. When they had crucified Jesus, they supposed they had effectually proved that he was not the Messiah, and sealed his condemnation as an impostor. It did not come into their minds, that, by this act of wickedness, they had fulfilled the prophecies, and accomplished one of the events necessary to the full proof that the object of their detestation was the true Messiah; even him to whom God had given power to reign until all enemies should become subject to him and acknowledge him to be their Lord, to the glory of the Father. ¶ *Which are read every Sabbath-day.* In the regular services of the synagogue on the Sabbath, a portion of the law was read, and also a portion of the prophetic writings. In this manner the greater part of the Old Testament was publicly read, once a year, in the hearing of the congregation, who unfortunately did not well understand what they heard. ¶ *They have fulfilled them in condemning him.* By crucifying the Lord of glory, the Jews fulfilled the ancient predictions concerning him. See notes on Luke xxiv. 25—27.

28. *Though they found no cause of death.* They could not convict him of any crime deserving death. The Roman governor, Pilate, again and again protested, that, after a strict examination and a full hearing of the witnesses against him, he found no fault in him, or any thing worthy of death. Luke xxiii. 14, 15; John xviii. 38; xix. 4, 6; but judgment of condemnation was actually extorted from him, by the terror of being denounced as an enemy to Cæsar. John xix. 12. ¶ *Yet desired they Pilate, &c.* See Matt. xxvii. 22—25; Luke xxiii. 18—23.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days

of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same

29. *When they had fulfilled all, &c.* See note on ver. 27. ¶ *They took him down.* "That is, it was done by the Jews. Not that it was done by those that put him to death, but by Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, and by Nicodemus, and their companions. Paul is speaking of what was done to Jesus by the Jews at Jerusalem; and he does not affirm that the same persons put him to death and laid him in a tomb, but that all this was done by Jews."—*Barnes*. ¶ *The tree.* The cross; often called a tree.

30. *But God raised him from the dead.* And thus gave convincing evidence that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Rom. i. 4. See note on Acts ii. 24. The opposition of the Jews, and all their efforts to stigmatize Jesus as an impostor, were utterly unavailing. In putting him to death, they did not dream that they were fulfilling the ancient prophecies, which they misunderstood, ver. 27. God restored him to life, and received him up on high; and thus gave assurance to the world that Jesus Christ is his beloved Son, and that as he lives, so shall they also live, for ever.

31. *He was seen, &c.* For an account of his various appearances to his disciples, see note at the end of John. ¶ *Many days.* The period is more definitely described as "forty days," Acts i. 3. ¶ *Of them which came up with him from Galilee.* The expression is general, and may include all who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. Very probably all these are included among the "five hundred brethren," who saw him "at once," 1 Cor. xv. 6. Yet there seems to be a special reference to the apostles, who were chosen and appointed as witnesses to the people concerning his precepts and example, his death, resurrection, and ascension.

32. *Declare unto you glad tidings.* See note on Luke ii. 10. The same word is elsewhere translated, "preach

the gospel;" but the sense is more fully expressed by the translation here. To the Jews, the annunciation of the Messiah's advent was truly glad tidings, because, however widely they mistook his true character, they expected many and rich blessings under his reign. To the Christian, who more fully realizes the character of the Master's mission, it is a source of perpetual joy and gratitude, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John iii. 16, 17. The hope of life and immortality, brought to light through the gospel of Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. i. 10, has consoled many hearts; and in due time it shall dry all tears, subdue all rebellious passions and impulses, and fill all hearts with confidence, love, holiness, and joy. Then shall be fulfilled the prophetic annunciation of the angel: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke ii. 10, 11.

¶ *The promise, &c.* The reference here is supposed by many to be the promises generally, contained in the Old Testament. But the phraseology seems rather to indicate one promise in particular; namely, the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; which promise, being a covenant of grace, or an absolute promise of God, was not made void by the law, or covenant of works, which was given four hundred and thirty years afterwards. See Gal. iii. 17. The same promise is referred to in similar terms, Acts iii. 25, 26; Gal. iii. 8. The succeeding verse also indicates that the promise had special reference to the mission of Jesus Christ.

33. *God hath fulfilled the same, &c.* "God has completed or carried into

unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is

effect by the resurrection of Jesus. He does not say that all the promise had reference to his resurrection; but his being raised up completed or perfected the fulfilment of the promises which had been made respecting him."

*Barnes.* Some suppose this passage relates not at all to the resurrection of Jesus, but rather to his appointment as the Messiah, or his exaltation to the kingdom over which he should reign until all enemies be subdued. The more common opinion, expressed by *Barnes*, seems preferable. The resurrection of Jesus was the crowning and conclusive evidence of his Messiahship. He claimed to be the Messiah; he wrought miracles, professedly by the power of God; he predicted his death and his resurrection on the third day. And unless we believe God intended to set the seal of his approbation upon an impostor, we must believe that, by raising up Jesus, he designed to confirm the fact that he was, what he professed to be, the true Messiah and the Son of God. Thus did he complete or make perfect the evidence that He had come, whose advent had been predicted to the fathers as fraught with blessings to mankind. We are not to understand that all the good was then actually accomplished, which was embraced in the promise, but that it was fairly commenced; and that, by raising up Jesus, and thus owning him as his Son, God had given a satisfactory pledge that its fulfilment was certain. See note on John xvii. 4, where, in a similar sense, Jesus declares that the *work* which he came to perform is *finished*. ¶ *In the second Psalm.* That the passage here quoted is found in the second Psalm, according to the present division, is certain. But many ancient copies read "the first Psalm," which reading is adopted by Griesbach and Knapp. By those who regard this as the true reading, it is said that what is now called the first Psalm was regarded by the Jews as a general preface to the Psalms, or that the first and second were included in one, and called the first. But other copies omit the number, and read simply "the Psalm;" and this has been regarded as the true reading, for reasons such as the following: "I suppose Luke to have written, 'as it is also written in the psalm.' I am the more

inclined to suppose this, as I do not remember that, in any other place of the New Testament, a psalm is pointed out by the number which it has in our present collection of the psalms; see Acts i. 16, 20; particularly here in ver. 35, it is said *in another psalm*, without any mention of the *sixteenth* psalm, in the tenth verse of which the words cited are found. Nor, indeed, in any other quotation, is any thing more specified than the name which the book bears; and sometimes not even that; as in the very next verse here, where Isaiah's prophecy is referred to, and yet no mention is made of his name; and in Acts iv. 25, though the words quoted are found in Ps. ii. 1, yet no mention is there made of either the book of Psalms, or of the number which that Psalm bears among them."—*Pearce*. ¶ *Thou art my Son.* Our Lord Jesus Christ is called the Son of God in more than one sense. He was his Son, by being appointed to the government of that kingdom which is to subject all enemies to obedience. He was his Son, by being his representative among men, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. He was also declared to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead. Rom. i. 4. And in this sense it seems most natural to understand the phrase here. "The resurrection from the dead is represented as in some sense the *beginning* of life, and it is with reference to this that the terms *Son* and *begotten from the dead* are used, as the birth of a child is the beginning of life. Thus Christ is said, Col. i. 18, to be "the *first-born* from the dead," and thus, in Rev. i. 5, he is called "*the first-begotten of the dead*;" and with reference to this *renewal* or beginning of life, he is called a *Son*."—*Barnes*. The whole connection, referring manifestly to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, justifies this interpretation. Whether such were the primary meaning of the passage quoted from the second Psalm, and it received its fulfilment in the resurrection of our Lord, or whether Paul quoted it, like other inspired writers, in an accommodated sense, may perhaps admit of question and doubt. But there seems to be no good reason for doubt, that he was speaking of the resurrection, in

also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he

verses 30—37; and that the passages cited from the Old Testament were applied by him, in some sense, to that event. ¶ *Begotten thee.* Renewed thy life, by raising thee from the dead. This is not the only meaning of this phrase; but it appears most suitable to this place, if the former part of the verse be rightly interpreted. It literally indicates the relation between a father and child on earth; but it often occurs in a figurative sense, expressive of other, though, in some respects, similar relations. For example, it denotes the relation between an apostle, and one who became a convert and a partaker of eternal life through his ministry. 1 Cor. iv. 15; Philem. 10. The apostle was instrumental in communicating spiritual life to his convert. In a similar sense, the same word denotes the commencement of the bright hopes and joyful expectations imparted by God's grace to the human heart through faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. i. 3. In all these cases, it indicates a newness of life, the commencement of a new state or condition of existence. It may therefore, without impropriety, be applied to the commencement (or, in the case of our Lord, to the re-commencement) of a spiritual state of being, unencumbered by the elements of mortality and corruption.

34. *And as concerning that.* More briefly and more literally, *and that.* The apostle presents a new fact in this verse. He had before spoken of the resurrection of Jesus from death to life: he now proceeds to show that the life would be endless. Jesus was "no more to return to corruption;" that is, he should never again die. In proof of this fact, he quotes an ancient prophecy, referring, not to the resurrection of Jesus except by implication, but to the perpetuity of his reign; a prophecy, the fulfilment of which necessarily implies his endless existence. ¶ *No more to return to corruption.* The body of Jesus did not undergo corruption or decomposition; so that, literally, he could not return to corruption, ver. 35, 37. Yet a state of death may be properly styled a state of corruption,

raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

inasmuch as decomposition generally follows the extinction of life. The meaning is sufficiently plain; but the expression must not be construed too literally. ¶ *He said on this wise.* Or, in this manner; he spake thus. The place referred to is Isa. lv. 3. ¶ *I will give you the sure mercies of David.* The quotation is made, almost literally, from the Septuagint, then in common use. "These words are found in Isa. lv. 3, where we read, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David;' but, for the sense of these words, we must have recourse to what God said to David in 2 Sam. vii. 11, 12, &c., explained by what is said in Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, 28, 29, 36; where frequent mention is made of a covenant established by God with David, and sworn to by God, that David's seed should endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven, and as the sun, and to all generations. This covenant and this oath are the sure and sacred things of which Isaiah, in ch. lv. 3, speaks, and Luke in this place. And Paul understood them as relating to the kingdom of Jesus, the son of David, which was to be an everlasting one; and if an everlasting one, then it was necessary that Jesus should have been, as he was, raised from the dead; and to support this argument, Paul, in the next verse, strengthens it with another drawn from Ps. xvi. 10."—*Pearce.* To the full accomplishment of the covenant with David, it was necessary not only that Jesus should be raised from the dead, as Bishop Pearce alleges, but also that, when raised, he should live for ever; and this, I apprehend, is the particular point which the apostle here labors to establish. The Jews generally admitted that the seed of David, who should possess his throne for ever, was the Messiah. Hence they supposed the Messiah would live for ever on the earth; for it was an earthly kingdom which they expected. Paul had labored to convince his hearers, that God had owned and declared Jesus of Nazareth to be his Son and the true Messiah, by raising him from the dead. And he now urges, that if Jesus sustain that

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption :

character, and the covenant remain firm and unbroken, he must necessarily live for ever, and no more be subject to death. In this manner, it is seen that the scripture quoted by him was directly applicable to his subject; and, the Jews themselves being judges, his reasoning was sound and conclusive.

35. *In another psalm.* See Ps. xvi. 10. *Thou shalt not suffer, &c.* See note on Acts ii. 27. He should never be reduced to that state which generally succeeds death; in other words, though crucified, dead, and buried, he should be reanimated, before decomposition commenced, and should never again taste of death.

36. *For David, &c.* See note on Acts ii. 29, where the same argument is used by Peter, for the same purpose; namely, to prove that David could not have spoken concerning himself, inasmuch as the prediction was not fulfilled in him. ¶ *After he had served his own generation, &c.* Some prefer to translate this phrase, "after he had in his own age served the will of God;" or, "after he had served or performed the will of God in his age or day." The meaning seems to be, that, during his life, he obeyed the commands of God, and discharged his duty to men, by ruling his people in the fear of God, and causing them to keep the divine statutes and ordinances. ¶ *Fell on sleep.* Or, fell asleep; that is, died. ¶ *And was laid unto his fathers.* He was buried with his fathers. Among the Orientals, a strong desire was manifested that the members of the same family might rest together in death. Thus, when Jacob was about to die in Egypt, he charged his children to bury him in the land of Canaan, in the same cave where the bones of his grand parents Abraham and Sarah, his parents Isaac and Rebekah, and his beloved wife Rachel, were deposited. Thus also Joseph, when the hour of death approached, "took an oath of

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 ¶ *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;*

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from

the children of Israel," that they would carry his bones with them, when they departed from Egypt; so that he also might be buried with his fathers. So usual was the custom of thus burying the different members of a family in the same sepulchre or cave, that to be gathered to his fathers, or to sleep with his fathers, became a common phrase to denote the death of an individual. ¶ *And saw corruption.* His body returned to dust, by the natural process of decomposition or corruption. No one believed that David rose from the dead, or that his body was preserved from the common fate of humanity. He, therefore, could not have been the person of whom it was said, "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," ver. 35. Some other person must have been intended. That other person, Paul asserts, was Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the prediction was literally fulfilled.

37. *Saw no corruption.* Before decomposition commenced, God raised him from the dead, and received him up on high, where death and its consequences could never be experienced. His resurrection was widely different from that of Lazarus and others, who, after having been once raised, died again, and, like other men, saw corruption.

38. *Be it known unto you, therefore, &c.* Having established the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the apostle proceeds to describe the character of the blessings to be expected through him. ¶ *Through this man, &c.* See notes on Matt. vi. 14, 15; Luke xxiv. 47. A full and free deliverance from the bondage and evil of sin is proclaimed.

39. *By him.* Or, in him. ¶ *All that believe, &c.* Of course, a living faith is intended; a faith working by love, and purifying the heart. See note on John iii. 15. ¶ *Justified.* Regarded and treated as just men; indeed, made just and pure, by the influence of those principles which are inculcated



which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest that

in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul here introduces the doctrine of justification by faith, which forms such a prominent and conspicuous feature in his epistles. ¶ *From all things.* From all offences, and from all guilt; from all that renders men unjust and sinful. ¶ *From which ye could not be justified,* &c. This contrast between the gospel and that law, which, with all its rites and ceremonies, had no power to make the comers thereunto perfect, is more fully exhibited in the epistles, especially in that to the Hebrews. "There is no atonement for wilful and presumptuous sins appointed in the law of Moses; but all sins are declared to be pardonable in the religion of Jesus. Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28, &c."—*Pearce*. Probably, however, the apostle's meaning extends beyond this interpretation. The law dealt chiefly with the conduct; the gospel deals with the heart. The law required certain external acts of worship; the gospel requires men to worship the spiritual Father in spirit and in truth. The law prescribed rules of intercourse between man and man, commanding certain acts of justice and forbidding specified acts of injustice; the gospel applies one rule of action to the heart, according to which the whole conduct is required to be regulated. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with  $\alpha\lambda$  thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. vii. 12; xxii. 37—40. See the same principle illustrated in several particulars, Matt. v. 43—48. Whatever may have been the original spiritual intent and meaning of the Mosaic law, it had manifestly become, in the days of Christ, of little practical effect, except in regard to the outward conduct. Hence our Saviour exclaimed, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited

come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and won-

sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. It is manifest that such legal righteousness as this, a mere outward conformity to the precepts of the law, had no power to *justify* the individual in the sight of God. On the contrary, the cardinal principles of the gospel—namely, a pure love to God and spiritual worship, and a pure love to mankind, and the performance of every kind and benevolent office for them which we could ask in return—are purifying in their nature; and they effectually *justify* the individual, in the same degree that he is brought under their influence.

40, 41. In these verses, the apostle admonishes his hearers, especially the Jews, that a rejection of the Messiah, whose advent was so fully confirmed by divine testimony, would be highly dangerous, and might subject them to the awful calamity previously denounced on their wicked nation by Jesus himself. "If you reject these benefits, now freely offered to you in the preaching of Christ crucified, you may expect such judgments from the hand of God as your forefathers experienced, when, for their rebellion and their contempt of his benefits, their city was taken, their temple destroyed, and themselves either slain by the sword or carried into captivity. It is evident that St. Paul refers to Hab. i., 5—10, and in those verses the desolation by the Chaldeans is foretold. Never was there a prophecy more correctly and pointedly applied. Those Jews did continue to slight the benefits offered to them by the Lord, and they persevered in their rebellions. What was the consequence? The Romans came, took away their city, burnt their temple, slew upwards of a million of them, and either carried or sold the rest of them into captivity. How exactly was the prophecy in both cases fulfilled!"—*Clarke*. "Paul could very properly use these words, because the calamities which the Jews endured, after the days

der, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

of Habakkuk, were similar to those now threatened them by the Romans — which indeed should chiefly affect those living and rebelling in Palestine, but, in some degree, all the Jews in their dispersion.”—*Rosenmüller*. “Paul quotes this passage as highly appropriate to the circumstances of his hearers, who would witness, in their day, a retribution of a most terrible kind, inflicted by the Romans upon the Jewish nation.”—*Livermore*. To the same effect, Grotius, Hammond, Wetstein, Knatchbull, and others. ¶ *Which is spoken of in the prophets*. Hab. i. 5—10. The Old Testament was divided by the Jews into three general portions; the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa or Holy Writings. The general division, here referred to, embraced the writings of the prophets. ¶ *Despisers*. Some prefer the word *heathen*, as more literally expressing the idea of the original Hebrew prophecy. Paul quotes, however, from the Septuagint, of which the present translation is sufficiently literal. And the word *despisers* correctly designates those among the Jews who would not receive Jesus as the Messiah, but mocked and derided him as a Nazarene and an impostor. ¶ *And wonder*. Or be astonished. The destruction which befell the Jews came upon them unexpectedly. Notwithstanding all previous warnings, though they even saw their city compassed by the Roman army, and though they found themselves becoming daily weaker and more helpless, they persisted to the last moment in the belief that they should be delivered, and should triumph over their enemies. See note on Matt. xxiv. 24—26. Their final overthrow filled them, not only with grief, but with astonishment, as a result unexpected and unaccountable. ¶ *And perish*. Be involved in the common destruction. “The word means literally to be removed from the sight, to disappear, and then to corrupt, defile, destroy. Matt. vi. 16, 19. The word, however, may mean to be suffused with shame; to be overwhelmed and confounded (*Schleusner*); and it may perhaps have this meaning here, answering to the

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Hebrew.”—*Barnes*. ¶ *I work a work*. I perform a deed. The reference is to the calamity about to befall the Jewish nation. “By rejecting the Messiah and his gospel, and by persevering in wickedness, they would bring upon themselves the destruction of the temple, and city, and nation. It was this threatened destruction doubtless to which the apostle referred.”—*Barnes*. ¶ *Which ye shall in no wise believe*. As in the days of the prophet, when the prediction was originally uttered, so in the time of the apostles, it was considered by the Jews a thing incredible that their city and temple should be destroyed. Jesus had forewarned them; but they scoffed at his admonition, and insinuated that it was blasphemous to speak of such an event. They urged this charge of blasphemy more distinctly against Stephen, when he had repeated his Master’s admonition. Acts vi. 13, 14. In such state of mind, they would not believe the most plain and positive declarations of God’s purpose to overwhelm them and their idolized temple and city in one common ruin. ¶ *Though a man declare it unto you*. Not only would they not anticipate such a result as the due reward of their wickedness, but they would not believe it, even when predicted by one who exhibited infallible proof that he spake by divine authority.

42. *And when the Jews, &c.* A very great difference is here found in the ancient MSS. Griesbach and Knapp, on what they deem sufficient authority, omit the words *Jews and Gentiles*, and read, “When they were gone out, they besought them,” &c. If this reading be correct, the meaning may be understood thus:—When Paul and Barnabas went out of the synagogue, the people requested them to preach again. Or if the present reading be correct, which most critics very much doubt, it may be understood to mean that many of the Jews left the synagogue, probably dissatisfied or incensed that any such calamity should be so much as mentioned; and that the Gentiles manifested a disposition to hear further testimony on the subject. In which case,

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 ¶ And the next sabbath-day

by *Gentiles* must be understood the proselytes; for unbelieving Gentiles were not accustomed to worship with the Jews in their synagogues. It is very difficult, however, and perhaps impossible, to determine with certainty what was the original form of this verse. ¶ *The next Sabbath.* Some understand this phrase to mean rather, "before the next Sabbath," or during the time between the Sabbaths. Whichever be correct, one fact is clear; that a portion of the audience manifested a wish to listen again to the preaching of the gospel, and therein gave evidence that they were disposed to lay hold on eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. See ver. 48.

43. *When the congregation was broken up.* More literally, *the synagogue being dissolved.* No violence is indicated; but the people left the synagogue, as usual, at the close of religious services. ¶ *Jews and religious proselytes.* Reference is still made to the same two classes of worshippers, before styled "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God," ver. 16; that is, native Jews, and proselytes from the Gentiles. ¶ *Followed Paul and Barnabas.* Adhered to them; manifested, as it would seem, some measure of faith in the gospel which had been preached by them. ¶ *Persuaded them to continue, &c.* Paul and Barnabas exhorted them who professed to entertain faith in their message, that they should persevere and stand fast in their belief in the gospel, called *the grace of God*, because it so fully exhibits that grace. To believe is well; but steadfastness in the faith is necessary to the full enjoyment of the blessing.

44. *The next Sabbath-day.* The Jewish Sabbath or seventh day, namely, which was devoted to religious services by the Jews and proselytes. On this day, the congregation would naturally be greater than on any day between the two Sabbaths, even if the apostles had preached once or more during the

came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

interval. No disturbance seems to have occurred, until this immense throng came together. ¶ *Came almost the whole city together.* Probably in and around the synagogue. The phrase is not to be construed literally; but it means, simply, that there was a general and very great gathering of the people. The newness of the doctrine and the fame of the preachers would attract multitudes, some from mere curiosity, and some from an honest desire to seek for truth.

45. *When the Jews saw the multitudes, &c.* The national prejudice of the Jews, which was the source of so much difficulty in the first establishment of Christianity, here manifests itself. Probably they thought the language of Paul was too general and comprehensive on the former occasion, ver. 38, 39, when he declared that true and honest believers in the gospel should be justified, without making any distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Very possibly he repeated the declaration, on this occasion, in even more plain terms, that others, besides Jews and proselytes, had an interest in the blessings of the Messiah's reign. His address is not recorded, though he seems to have alleged something which the Jews contradicted. ¶ *Filled with envy.* Literally, *zeal.* It here denotes indignation against the apostles, for preaching a doctrine so much at variance with their prejudices, or an envious disposition in regard to the Gentiles, founded on an unwillingness to admit them to a participation of equal privileges and blessings. They could not patiently listen to a doctrine which portended the overthrow of their previous form of faith, and which asserted that their own nation, notwithstanding its high-toned pretensions of peculiar piety, was actually so wicked as to be on the verge of utter destruction. ¶ *Spake against.* They opposed the doctrines preached by Paul, and endeavored to prevent the people from

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but

believing. The manner of their opposition is specified in two particulars. ¶ *Contradicting.* Denying the truth of what Paul asserted. ¶ *And blaspheming.* Not directly blaspheming God, for this the Jews would scrupulously avoid; but blaspheming the name of Jesus, by reviling and railing against him. To speak thus scornfully and disrespectfully of him is styled blasphemous in Luke xxii. 65. Some suppose the meaning is, that they blasphemed Paul; but the former interpretation seems preferable. It is a common misfortune of disputants, that, when they find themselves unable to answer argument by argument, they resort to abuse and reproach. It has been quaintly said, that a deaf man may accurately determine which of two disputants is defeated, by noticing which first manifests tokens of vexation and ill-temper. Thus must discussions be expected to end, when the parties contend for victory rather than for truth.

46. *Waxed bold.* Became bold; or, perhaps rather, became more free and plain in their manner of address. See note on Acts iv. 13. They had before intimated, more distinctly than was agreeable to the Jews, that the Gentiles were interested in the great salvation by Jesus Christ. They now openly and positively declared their intention to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and thereby distinctly expressed their belief that its blessings as justly and rightfully belonged to the Gentiles as to the Jews. ¶ *It was necessary.* Such was the original design, and such the command; and the apostles regarded it as their duty to preach *first* to the Jews, giving them the first opportunity to embrace the gospel. And this course they pursued even after their open avowal that its blessings belonged also to the Gentiles: when they entered a city, they first preached to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles. See Acts xvii. 1, 2; xviii. 1—4. ¶ *Put it from you.* Reject it; refuse to believe it. ¶ *And judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life.* We are not to understand that the Jews expressed any such opinion in words: on the contrary,

seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles:

47 For so hath the Lord com-

they considered themselves, and those who professed the same form of religion, as having an *exclusive* claim to ever lasting life, as they understood the term. The meaning is, that, by their rejection of the gospel, they manifested their unfitness to become the recipients of its blessings. The light was presented to them; but they closed their eyes against it, preferring darkness before light; and thus judged or condemned themselves as unworthy to receive any present benefit from it. See John iii. 18, 19, where the same word is rendered *condemned*. For the meaning of *everlasting life*, as the result of faith in the gospel, see note on John iii. 15. ¶ *Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* "The moral courage and grandeur of sentiment contained in these words can be but feebly understood by us now, after that great controversy between Jewish bigotry and gospel liberty has passed away; but when we consider the original education of Paul, as one of the straitest of the straitest sect, and the violent prejudices, not only of his enemies, but even of his Christian converts and companions, against the admission of the Gentiles to any equality of Christian privileges with the Jews, we shall feel that the apostle spoke as no ordinary hero."—*Livermore*. The same kind of courage has been required by circumstances existing in later periods of the church. The same disposition has been manifested by men to monopolize the blessings of the gospel, and to deny any share of them to mankind in general. Any attempt to extend the area of gospel grace, and to proclaim it as the free heritage of all God's children, has been encountered by frowns and the most determined opposition. But by the blessing of God, whenever the hour has come, the men have come with it. And there have not been wanting strong-hearted and devoted heralds of the cross, who, in the face of all contradiction and peril, have stood forth as witnesses that the Lord Jesus Christ was appointed by the Father, not only as the Saviour of the Jews, but also as a

manded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard

light unto the Gentiles, that he should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. See ver. 47.

47. *So hath the Lord commanded us, saying*, &c. The passage quoted occurs in Isaiah xlix. 6, in which it is declared that the blessings to be conferred by the Messiah shall not be confined to the Jews, but shall extend universally. Paul refers to this, rather than to the command he had personally received from the Lord Jesus, Acts xxvi. 16—18, probably because his hearers would scoff at any command of Jesus, but would not dare impeach the veracity of their deservedly favorite prophet. ¶ *Light of the Gentiles.* See note on Luke ii. 32. ¶ *For salvation unto the ends of the earth.* That he should in due time save his people from their sins, and become, in the largest sense of the phrase, the Saviour of the world. Matt. i. 21; 1 John iv. 14.

48. *They were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord.* They rejoiced in the bright prospect opened before them, and honored the divine testimony, through a Jewish prophet, that grace and salvation were not alone for the benefit of the Jews, but should be freely imparted to all nations. The exclusive pretensions of the Jews were effectually condemned by their own prophet; and though they were confounded, and nearly suffocated with smothered rage, the Gentiles rejoiced, glorified God and his word, and with all readiness of heart embraced the blessing by faith. ¶ *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* "This text has been most pitifully misunderstood. Many suppose that it simply means, that those in that assembly who were *fore-ordained* or *predestinated* to eternal life, believed, under the influence of that decree. The verb signifies to *place, set, order, appoint, dispose*; hence it has been considered here as implying the *disposition* or readiness of mind of several persons in the congregation, such as the *religious proselytes* mentioned in ver. 43, who possessed the reverse of the *disposition* of those Jews

this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

49 And the word of the Lord

who *spake against those things, contradicting and blaspheming*, ver. 45. Though the word in this place has been variously translated, yet of all the meanings ever put on it, none agrees worse with its nature and known signification, than that which represents it as intending those who were *predestinated* to eternal life: this is *no* meaning of the term, and should never be applied to it."—*Clarke*. "And when the Gentiles heard this good news, that this pardon of sins and salvation by Christ was allowed them, they rejoiced and blessed the name of God for this glorious mercy of his, revealed in the gospel; and all they of the Gentiles, that had any care or pursuit of the life to come, the Gentile proselytes, or that were *fitly disposed* and qualified for the gospel to take root in, received the doctrine of Christ thus preached to them."

—*Hammond*. Horne declares, that if this passage had been translated properly, it would read, "*As many as were disposed for eternal life believed*;" which rendering is not only faithful to the original, but also to the *context* and *scope* of the sacred historian, who is relating the effects or consequences of the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. For the Jews had contradicted Paul, and blasphemed; while the religious proselytes heard with profound attention, and cordially received the gospel he preached to them. The former were, through their own stubbornness, utterly *indisposed* to receive that gospel, while the latter, destitute of prejudice and prepossession, rejoiced to hear that the Gentiles were included in the covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ; and, therefore, in this good state or *disposition* of mind, they believed." So much may suffice for an interpretation of this passage, in which many other commentators substantially agree.

49. *The word of the Lord.* That is, the gospel, as preached by Paul and Barnabas. ¶ *Published throughout all the region.* Was proclaimed, not only by the apostles, but also by those who heard them, throughout the province of Pisidia.

was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

50. *The Jews stirred up, &c.* It will be found on examination, that, though the apostles frequently suffered persecution from the Gentiles, such persecution was uniformly instigated by the Jews. It was so in this case. Antioch in Pisidia was a Gentile city, under the government of Gentile rulers; and it was by their authority that the apostles were expelled from the city; but the opposition was "stirred up" by the Jews. ¶ *The devout and honorable women.* Generally understood to mean those females among the proselytes who belonged to influential families, perhaps the wives or daughters of some of the rulers. ¶ *Chief men.* Rulers, and those who had influence with them. ¶ *Raised persecution.* Induced the rulers to forbid their long-er continuance in the city, and to expel them even from its borders.

51. *Shook off the dust of their feet, &c.* See note on Matt. x. 14. This phrase, and the import of the action, were familiar to the Jews. ¶ *Came unto Iconium.* "This was the capital city of Lycaonia, which province lay at the back of Pamphylia, higher up in Asia Minor, and to the north-east of Pamphylia."—*Pearce*. It is now called Cogni, or Konieh, and is the capital of Caramania. It was only a few miles distant from Antioch in Pisidia, where the events previously narrated occurred.

52. *The disciples, &c.* Including the new converts. The natural effect of faith in the gospel is to fill the heart with joy, inasmuch that outward afflictions are endured with cheerfulness. Rom. v. 3—5; 1 Pet. i. 8. A gloomy countenance is a sorry index of a living faith in the gospel of divine grace, the gospel of salvation.

## CHAPTER XIV.

AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they

## CHAPTER XIV.

1. *Iconium.* See note on Acts xiii. 51. In this city, and during this portion of his ministry, Paul is supposed to have been known by Timothy. See 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. ¶ *Into the synagogue of the Jews.* Notwithstanding the declared purpose of the apostles to "turn to the Gentiles," or to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, as having a common interest in it with the Jews, Acts xiii. 46, yet here, as elsewhere, they went first into the synagogue and addressed the Jews, giving them the preference in point of time, but yet preaching to the Gentiles in their turn. ¶ *And so spake.* With such energy and power; with such fervor and efficacy. ¶ *Greeks.* Probably a portion of the proselytes; as other Gentiles were not accustomed to visit Jewish synagogues.

2. *Stirred up, &c.* See note on Acts xiii. 50. ¶ *Made their minds evil-affected, &c.* Exasperated or embittered their minds against the *disciples*, by which name Christians were then known.

3. *Long time.* The precise length of time is not known. It was long, in comparison with the short visit at Antioch. ¶ *Therefore.* Or, however. ¶ *Abode they.* The persecution at first was not such as to endanger life; nor did the rulers, as it would seem, then attempt to expel them from the city. This was not a case therefore which justified flight. See note on Matt. x. 23. Their previous success, ver. 1, encouraged them to remain in Iconium, and, by an open proclamation of the gospel, to convert, if possible, additional numbers of both Jews and Greeks. ¶ *Speaking boldly, &c.* See note on

speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

5 And when there was an assault

made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use *them* despitely, and to stone them,

6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about :

Acts xiii. 46. ¶ *In the Lord.* In his name, or in his cause. ¶ *Which gave testimony, &c.* That is, the Lord gave testimony, by enabling the apostles to perform miracles. By *Lord*, some understand God; and some, the Lord Jesus Christ. The meaning will be very nearly the same in either case. If we suppose that God thus gave testimony, we shall understand also that he empowered his servants to perform miracles, by a direct exertion of his own power. But if we suppose that Jesus is intended, we shall understand that divine power was communicated to the apostles through him. See notes on Matt. xxviii. 18—20. In either case, we are to regard God as the fountain whence the power was derived, which no man could exert without divine assistance. John iii. 2. ¶ *Word of his grace.* The gospel, which contains a revelation of the gracious purposes of God, and an exhibition of grace in the language and conduct of his Son. ¶ *Signs and wonders.* Miracles. This kind of evidence was freely granted in the early age of the church, and ensured that success of the apostles which would otherwise seem incredible.

4. *Was divided.* Literally, there was a schism. There was a difference of opinion among the people, and parties were formed. ¶ *Part held with the Jews.* The division was not confined to the Jews and proselytes; but the people of the city were also divided. The Jews had endeavored to excite and exasperate the rulers and people, ver. 2; and they succeeded so far that a large party espoused their cause, and overpowered those who were favorably inclined to Christianity and its ministers. ¶ *The apostles.* This name is here given to both Paul and Barnabas; though, strictly speaking, it belonged only to Paul.

5. *Was an assault made, &c.* "Greek, a *rush*. It denotes an impetuous excitement and aggression; a

*rush* made to put them to death. It rather describes a popular tumult than a calm and deliberate purpose. There was a violent, tumultuous excitement." —*Barnes.* It is manifest that no personal assault was actually made; for the apostles obtained information of the purpose, and escaped. ¶ *To stone them.* By the Jewish law, death by stoning was the penalty of blasphemy. Deut. xiii. 10. The Jews assumed that Paul and Barnabas were guilty of blasphemy, as did their brethren in the case of Stephen, Acts vi. 13, 14; vii. 57—59; and they persuaded so many Gentiles to join them, that they were about to inflict such penalty in a tumultuary manner.

6. *They were ware of it.* They were informed of it; became cognizant of the evil purpose of their enemies. Agreeably to their Master's command, Matt. x. 23, instead of sacrificing their lives in a hopeless and useless struggle, they retired before the furious storm, that they might still live and labor in their Master's vineyard. In a subsequent period they found a better soil for the seed they were commissioned to sow; and their labors were rewarded by an abundant harvest. ¶ *Lystra and Derbe.* These are here declared to be "cities of Lycaonia;" and they were not far distant from Iconium. Lystra, now called Latik, is said to have been the residence, and was probably the birthplace, of Timothy, Acts xvi. 1. Derbe was in the same province, and is supposed to have been near Lystra. The apostles seem to have preached first in Lystra, ver. 8; being driven thence, they fled to Derbe, ver. 20, and subsequently returned through Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, and Perga; and then sailed for Antioch in Syria, whence they were sent out on this mission, ver. 21—26. Derbe, therefore, was the termination of their outward journey, and the point from which they began to retrace their steps.

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

9 The same heard Paul speak : who steadfastly beholding him, and

perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech

¶ *And unto the region, &c.* They not only preached in the cities named, but occasionally also in the adjacent places. Wherever a "door of utterance" was opened, they were ready "to speak the mystery of Christ." Col. iv. 3.

7. *Preached the gospel.* Apparently to Gentiles only. No Jews are mentioned, until certain of them came thither from Antioch and Iconium, and created a disturbance, ver. 19.

8. *There sat.* This word often signifies *dwelt, resided*. In this place, however, it seems to be used in its more literal sense, denoting the usual posture of the cripple, who was unable to stand, by reason of the impotency of his feet. Very probably this cripple was a beggar, placed daily by his friends in some thoroughfare or place of public resort, that he might solicit alms. ¶ *Cripple.* This word is peculiarly applicable in this case. Being derived from *creep*, it properly denotes inability to walk; it is sometimes used in a more general sense. ¶ *Who never had walked.* This is mentioned as additional evidence of the reality of the miracle. There could be no suspicion of imposture or collusion.

9. *Heard Paul speak.* That is, heard him preach the gospel. Perhaps he mentioned the miracles by which Jesus demonstrated his divine mission, and those which his apostles were empowered to perform in proof of the same glorious truth. But whatever may have been the particular form of his address, it seems to have convinced the cripple that the Lord Jesus was the messenger of the Most High, and empowered to perform miracles. ¶ *Steadfastly beholding him.* Looking intently and scrutinizingly upon him. ¶ *Perceiving, &c.* The deep interest and growing confidence of the cripple may have been plainly depicted on his countenance. The human face, though often taught to conceal or disguise the emotions of the heart, sometimes discloses

those emotions so plainly that they become visible to the attentive beholder. Or the apostle may have discerned the faith of this individual miraculously. See note on Acts v. 3. ¶ *Had faith to be healed.* Believed in Jesus as the Messiah, and had confidence that his apostles were endowed with miraculous power, so that they could heal him, if they chose to exert that power. Or, as some understand the passage, Paul perceived in the countenance of the cripple an indication of a confident hope that he should be healed.

10. *With a loud voice.* There was no appearance of mystery or jugglery in this case; but all was performed openly, so that the people might have full evidence that an actual miracle had been performed. The great object of the miracle was to produce a favorable impression on the people at large; and though its physical benefit was enjoyed chiefly by one individual, its spiritual energy was designed for more general operation. Hence Paul elevated his voice, that the attention of the people might be attracted and fixed on the wonderful cure about to be performed. See note on John xi. 43. ¶ *He leaped.* See note on Acts iii. 8. The cure was instantaneous. The cripple felt in himself the new power bestowed on him; and, without pleading inability, he made the effort required, and, springing from the ground, walked with ease and freedom, and with a joyful heart.

11. *Lifted up their voices.* Hailing the supposed descent of the gods, with shouts of joy. ¶ *In the speech of Lycaonia.* What language was used in that province is not known: it has, indeed, been conjectured that it was a corruption of the Greek; but this is conjecture only. It has been conjectured, also, that Paul and Barnabas could not understand this language, "else they would have earlier repressed the enthusiasm of the people." Hence it has been



of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

inferred that they did not possess the gift of tongues." I apprehend this conjecture is unfounded, and the inference contrary to matter of fact. (1.) If Paul could not understand the Lycaonians, how happens it that they could understand him? He was not accustomed to spend his time so idly as to preach in a language which his hearers could not understand. His motto was, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." 1 Cor. xiv. 19. It is manifest that, on this occasion, he used language which his hearers could understand; and if they could understand him, it is certainly a reasonable presumption that he could understand them. (2.) The inference, that he did not possess the gift of tongues, is contradicted by his own express declaration:—"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." 1 Cor. xiv. 18. (3.) The fact that the apostles did not "earlier repress the enthusiasm of the people," may be explained, by supposing that the first exclamations of the people were unheeded by the apostles, whose attention was, for the moment, directed to the man upon whom the miracle of healing was performed; and that the preparations for offering sacrifice were not made in their presence, but in some other part of the city. ¶ *The gods are come down, &c.* The people of Lycaonia were idolaters. They worshipped gods many and lords many, in common with the heathen nations generally. Their mythology seems to have resembled that of the Greeks and Romans. It was a common opinion that the gods assumed human forms, and visited mankind, to obtain information, or to bestow blessings, and sometimes for unholy purposes. In the great epic poems of Homer and Virgil, the gods are thus represented as mingling freely, in human form, with men, and as very actively engaged in their transactions; and these representations were probably consistent with the general state of public opinion. When, therefore, the people witnessed the miraculous cure of the cripple, conscious that more than

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

human power had been exerted, they at once supposed that the gods were then present, and had performed the miracle.

12. *They called Barnabas, Jupiter.*

Jupiter, or Jove, was the supreme god, in the heathen mythology. To him was assigned dominion in heaven, and a general control over all the other gods. He was sometimes designated as the father of gods and men. "Chrysostom observes, that the heathens represented Jupiter as an old but vigorous man, of a noble and majestic aspect, and large robust make, which therefore he supposes might be the form of Barnabas; whereas Mercury appeared young, little, and nimble, as Paul might probably do, for he was yet but a young man."—*Doddridge*. A different reason, however, and undoubtedly the true and principal reason, is assigned by the historian, founded on another supposed characteristic of Mercury. ¶ *And Paul, Mercurius, because, &c.* Mercury was represented in the heathen mythology as the god of eloquence, and as the messenger generally employed by Jupiter to convey his commands to others, or to interpret his will to them. As Paul alone addressed the people, in presence of Barnabas, they naturally supposed him to be Mercury, if Barnabas was Jupiter. Many other offices were assigned to Mercury by the current mythology; but this was the one by which the Lycaonians supposed they had identified him in the person of Paul. "Mr. Harrington well observes, that this persuasion might gain the more easily on the minds of the Lycaonians, on account of the well-known fable of Jupiter and Mercury, who were said to have descended from heaven in human shape, and to have been entertained by Lycaon, from whom the Lycaonians received their name."—*Doddridge*. ¶ *Because he was the chief speaker.* Paul was peculiarly qualified for the office of chief speaker. His mind was strong and active by nature; it had been thoroughly nurtured and trained by Gamaliel in all the learning of the age; and it had been illuminated by special revelation

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul heard of, they rent

their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the

of the divine will. Added to all this, was a temperament ardent and energetic. No one of the apostles equalled him in the double labor of preaching the gospel, and writing in its explication and defence; and none had a more clear perception than he of its spiritual truths.

13. *The priest of Jupiter.* Altars were erected to the gods by the heathens, each having one or more priests to offer sacrifices, and to exercise a general superintendence over the religious ceremonies. ¶ *Which was before their city.* "That is, whose statue was. The heathens supposed that the deity was present in his image or statue; and therefore they used themselves to say that of the statue which was proper to the deity only."—*Pearce.* The ancient heathens supposed that particular places or cities were under the special protection of certain deities. See Acts xix. 26—35. To such deities, altars were erected in conspicuous places; sometimes near the gates of cities, that the attention of all who entered might be attracted. ¶ *Brought oxen.* Oxen were frequently sacrificed to the gods. It is generally supposed that two oxen were brought on this occasion; one to be sacrificed to Jupiter, and one to Mercury. ¶ *And garlands.* It was customary to hang garlands of flowers or leaves upon the statues of the gods, and also upon the horns of the oxen destined to be sacrificed. ¶ *Unto the gates.* The gates of the city, near which the temple stood. Some suppose the gates of the temple, or of the house in which Paul and Barnabas then were, are intended; and that the design was to offer sacrifice to them directly, instead of making the offering before the statues of the gods whom they were supposed to represent. ¶ *Done sacrifice.* Offered sacrifice. They acted according to the principles of their own religion, which taught that the gods sometimes appeared in human shape. They believed there was now such an

appearance, inasmuch as divine power had been manifested; and, rejoicing in this mark of divine favor, they prepared promptly to offer the sacrifices understood to be due to the gods. How different this from the conduct of the Jews! They believed in the true God, and that he sometimes sent inspired messengers to speak in his name. Yet when Jesus came, exhibiting more in fallible tokens of divine approbation than had ever been witnessed, they refused to accept him in God's name, but persecuted and destroyed him. They even attributed his mighty works to the devil, to avoid acknowledging him as the Son of God.

14. *The apostles, Barnabas and Paul.* Both are styled *apostles*, though the title is not generally supposed to belong to Barnabas, except so far as his being *sent forth* from Antioch constituted him an apostle. This title would not be unsuitable to him, because *apostle* means one *sent forth*; but it is generally limited to those specially appointed by the Lord. ¶ *Heard of.* The preparations were made at a distance from the apostles, and the idolatrous rite was about to be performed when the fact first came to their knowledge. See note on ver. 11. ¶ *They rent their clothes.* An action, emblematical, among the Jews, of grief, and also of indignation or horror. See Gen. xxxvii. 34; Matt. xxvi. 65. By this significant act, they expressed their abhorrence of such idolatrous practices, and immediately pointed out the absurdity of offering sacrifices to mortal men, instead of the true and living God.

15. *Sirs.* Literally, men. ¶ *Why do ye these things?* This question, or remonstrance, is expressive of decided disapprobation. ¶ *We also are men of like passions, &c.* We also are men, subject to the same infirmities, liable to the same sufferings, as yourselves. Tyndale translates, not literally, but according to the meaning, "We are men like you." Haweis, "We too are

living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein :

mortals, subject to the same infirmities with you." Wakefield, "We too are but men, of like weakness with yourselves." The Vulgate has it, "*et nos mortales sumus, similes vobis homines*;" we also are mortals, men like yourselves. The idea here expressed distinctly is substantially implied in the other translations; for liability to all the sufferings incident to humanity necessarily implies liability to death. And that the word *passion*, as well as the original from which it is translated, signifies suffering and even death, is manifest from its use in Matt. xvi. 21; Acts i. 3. There is not the slightest probability that Paul intended to declare himself and Barnabas to be under the dominion of violent and ungovernable passions, as some have supposed. His object was simply to declare that they were men, and not gods; and therefore ought not to be worshipped. To have said they had strong passions, in the usual sense of the term, would not be sufficient to convince the people that they were not gods; for the people believed the gods themselves, not even excepting Jupiter, were subject occasionally to the most violent and the most gross and debasing passions. But they believed the gods were immortal; and they must have been convinced of their mistake in regard to Paul and Barnabas, so soon as they were satisfied that these supposed deities were mortal, like themselves. ¶ *Preach unto you.* We come, not to be worshipped, but to teach you whom you should worship. The word here rendered *preach* is elsewhere translated "preach the gospel," and "bring good tidings." See note on Luke ii. 10. It was truly a gospel message which pointed out to the idolatrous Lycaonians the true object of worship; and, instead of "gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust, whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust," disclosed to them one living and true God, the author of all blessings enjoyed, and the fountain of blessings hoped for. ¶ *Turn from these vanities.* The services rendered to imaginary deities might well be called vanities, as there was no *actual* object of worship. Such

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

deities also were vanities, for they had no existence. Hence, in the Old Testament, both idols and idol-worship are denominated vanity. Deut. xxxii. 21; Jer. xiv. 22. Turn from these idols, and forsake these vain and useless forms of idol-worship. ¶ *Unto the living God.* The contrast is between the living or *actual* God and those which are vanities, having no existence. ¶ *Which made heaven, &c.* Paul announced the God whom he preached, as the Creator of all things, — of the universe, and all which it contains. Such a God deserved the reverence of all his intelligent creatures; and, when his benevolence, manifested in the bestowment of countless blessings, is realized, the gratitude and confidence of the heart will not be withheld. To this God, Paul exhorted his hearers to pay their religious homage, rather than to those vain idols which have eyes, but see not; ears, but hear not; hands, but handle not; or to those imaginary beings supposed to be represented by the images, for they have no actual existence.

16. *In times past.* In former ages, until his Son Jesus Christ appeared. ¶ *Suffered all nations.* Permitted all nations. The word used here is frequently translated *Gentiles*; and in this sense it must be understood, because the Jews had not been left thus long to the guidance of their own unaided reason, but possessed the oracles of God. Why God left the Gentiles in darkness, and forbore for the space of four thousand years to grant them a special revelation of his will, men may conjecture, but they cannot know with certainty. Whatever was the design of God, the fact is certain; and from that fact we may learn a useful and important lesson; namely, that mere human reason, unaided and unenlightened by divine revelation, is not able to grasp the full measure of spiritual truth, or attain such assurance concerning the divine character and will, and the destiny of mankind, as to enter into the enjoyment of peace and blessedness. During this period, Greece and Rome flourished in their utmost glory. Their philosophers,

17 Nevertheless he left not him- self without witness, in that he did

famed in their own age and in ours for their wisdom, utterly failed in their efforts to conceive the true character of God, as is evident from the mythology which they countenanced, as well as from their own direct testimony. Concerning the destiny of man, they were also in doubt. Some hoped, indeed, for a future existence; but the most enthusiastic had less actual faith, in this respect, than the humblest Christian. When philosophers thus failed, the mass of the people cannot be supposed to have been successful. In point of fact, darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, until it pleased God to send his Son for a light to lighten every man that cometh into the world. Luke i. 79; John i. 9. The result of all mere human speculations is graphically described by the apostle in Rom. i. 22—25. And modern self-styled philosophers, notwithstanding all their boasting, can proceed no further, except as they are guided by that divine light which they affect to undervalue and despise. For the gift of that light, for the revelation of God's grace, which discloses to us the divine character, our own duty, and the destiny of our race, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to the living and true God. Happy are we, if we are not unmindful of his goodness, nor ungrateful to him for the manifold blessings he has bestowed upon us. ¶ *To walk in their own ways.* To follow the dictates of their own reason, without the guidance or restraint of any divine law. They were not all equally sinful. Some of them by nature observed those moral principles which are enforced in the law. Rom. ii. 14, 15. But their number was small; and the general state of public morals was deplorable. "The times of that ignorance God winked at;" as he doubtless had some merciful purpose to be accomplished thereby. But now, a divine law being given, all are required to obey, and to break off all sin by sincere and effectual repentance.

17. *Nevertheless, he left not, &c.* Notwithstanding he had given no direct revelation for so long a time, he had not concealed his existence; but by his works of mercy and grace he had given manifest tokens, both of his existence and character. Rom. i. 19—21.

Though men failed to discover the truths thus presented, the testimony was none the less actual and conclusive. ¶ *Without witness.* Without testimony: his works testified his existence, and their benevolence indicated his character. ¶ *In that he did good.* By doing good, or conferring blessings. Goodness is the peculiar characteristic of the Deity. The Anglo-Saxon name *God* is the same word which, in that language, signified *good*. In the English language, a slight difference in form exists between *God* and *good*; but their original is the same. This name of the universal Father is peculiarly appropriate and peculiarly scriptural; for in the scriptures it is expressly declared that "God is Love," 1 John iv. 8, 16; but he is never called holiness, or justice, or truth, though uniformly represented as infinitely holy, just, and true. ¶ *And gave us rain from heaven.* The rain which descends upon the earth, and restores vigor and beauty to trees, shrubs, flowers, and the green carpet of the earth, previously shrivelled and parched with heat, has always been regarded as a blessing. Especially was it so regarded in the East, where living springs and streams of water were comparatively few. "There is scarcely any thing that more certainly indicates unceasing care and wisdom than the needful and refreshing showers of rain. The sun and stars move by fixed laws, whose operation we can see and anticipate. The falling of rain and dew is regulated by laws which we cannot trace, and *seems* therefore to be poured, as it were, directly from God's hollow hand. Ps. cxlvii. 8."—*Barnes*. The rain is often mentioned in the scriptures as a manifestation of God's goodness, and the efficacy and impartiality of that goodness. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. lv. 10. And when our Saviour was exhorting his disciples to love all men, even their enemies, he appealed

good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

to the same exhibition of divine and impartial goodness: do this, said he, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. v. 45. ¶ *And fruitful seasons.* Seasons when the earth yields a harvest, to supply the wants of man and beast. Such seasons depend, in a great degree, upon a due proportion and admixture of heat from the sun, and moisture from the dew and rain. And although there is sometimes a partial failure in the products of the earth, in particular regions, yet the lack is supplied by an abundance elsewhere; so that through successive ages the ancient promise has been uniformly fulfilled: "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." Gen. viii. 22. To this manifest token of divine goodness, the Psalmist refers, in proof that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works:"—"The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Ps. cxlv. 9, 15, 16. ¶ *Filling our hearts.* Filling us. A common figure of speech, by which a part is put for the whole. ¶ *Food and gladness.* The constant supply of our physical wants, and the comfort we thereby experience, are of themselves tokens of divine favor; especially when connected, as in the heart of a true Christian, with gratitude for past mercies, confidence in God for daily bread through life, and for that infinitely richer blessing, the bread of life, which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. John vi. 50.

18. *With these sayings.* With these arguments in proof that worship should be rendered only to the true God. ¶ *Scarce restrained, &c.* The people were so confident that the gods had come down in human form, that even by these arguments they were with

19 ¶ And there came thither *certain Jews* from Antioch, and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

difficulty restrained from paying divine honors to Paul and Barnabas.

19. *Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium.* As usual, this persecution was excited by Jews. Not content to persecute the disciples in their own borders, they followed them from place to place, as here, and Acts xvii. 13. Paul himself had once been engaged in the same ungodly work, persecuting the disciples "even unto strange cities." Acts xxvi. 11. ¶ *Persuaded the people.* Instigated them; instilled prejudices into their minds against the apostles. ¶ *Having stoned Paul.* The Jews succeeded probably in persuading the people that Paul was an impostor; and, with the usual versatility of a mob, they who had recently been ready to offer sacrifice to him as a god joined in the attempt to murder him by stoning. Their conduct was strikingly similar to that of the Jews, who hailed the Lord Jesus, with loud acclamations,—"Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord;" and, within a few days afterwards, joined the diabolical outcry, "Crucify him, crucify him." Luke xix. 38; xxiii. 21. ¶ *Drew him out of the city.* The outrage was committed in the city, and was probably an ebullition of popular fury, without even the form of law. Either to avoid a nuisance in the city, or to express their utter detestation of Paul, they drew the body outside of the gates, and there left it, without burial. This was regarded in the East as the extremity of disgrace, and as the most terrible punishment which could be inflicted. ¶ *Supposing he had been dead.* Or, in more common terms, supposing him to be dead. They had no intention to spare his life; but they stoned him until they thought he was dead, and then ignominiously cast him out of the city. Some commentators have supposed that Paul was actually dead, and was miraculously restored again to life. But this supposition seems improbable; for the historian would not omit to notice such an important and stupendous miracle, had it actually been performed.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached

20. *Howbeit.* Notwithstanding the appearance of death. ¶ *As the disciples.* Before this tumult, Paul had preached in Lystra, ver. 7, and had doubtless converted some. Probably these were the disciples here mentioned. ¶ *Stood round about him.* It was natural that they should follow, to see what disposition was made of the body of Paul, especially as none of them had reason to fear personal harm, except perhaps Barnabas; and it does not appear that he was present. When the mob dispersed, the disciples gathered around Paul. It may be, they thought him dead, and were consulting how they might best dispose of his body; or it may be, they thought him not dead, and were watching for signs of reanimation; or which is perhaps still more probable, they may have been in doubt whether he were dead or not, and were endeavoring to ascertain the fact. In either case, it was natural that, for a few moments, they should stand around him. ¶ *He rose up.* Although there is no evidence that Paul was actually killed and raised from the dead, yet there are indications of a miraculous interposition for the preservation of his life. It is scarcely possible that, without extraordinary protection, a man should be stoned by an infuriated mob until supposed to be dead, and then dragged through the city with violence and cast out like a dead dog, and yet escape without the fracture of bones, or such severe bruises as to prevent him from walking back into the city, on the same day, and commencing a journey on foot on the morrow. But these facts are recorded concerning Paul. After the frequent custom of the sacred writers, the historian relates the facts, without attempting to account for them. The most reasonable solution is, that he was preserved from serious bodily harm, by the special exertion of divine power. ¶ *Came into the city.* Not publicly, we may well suppose, but privately. His public appearance, on the same day, would have provoked a repetition of the violent outrage. Probably he retired to the house of some disciple,

the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to

and was there concealed until the next morning. ¶ *He departed with Barnabas.* In such a state of public excitement and exasperation, any further effort to preach the gospel would have been useless. The apostles therefore retired, agreeably to their Master's direction, Matt. x. 23. ¶ *Derbe.* See ver. 6.

21. *Had taught many.* Literally, *had disciplined many*, or, in more common phrase, had made many disciples. Derbe was the extreme point of this journey of Paul and Barnabas. From hence they retraced their steps towards Antioch, visiting, on their way, several cities where they had preached, and nourishing and comforting the disciples. It does not appear how long they tarried in Derbe; but sufficiently long, it is evident, to reap some fruit of their labors; for they made many disciples. ¶ *They returned again to Lystra, &c.* The apostles manifested much courage, by returning again to the cities where they had been so violently persecuted. It should be observed, however, that they do not appear to have preached publicly, on their return, until they arrived at Perga, where there is no evidence that they had been violently opposed; nor indeed is it certain that they preached there, on their former visit. Acts xiii. 13. 44. But they visited the disciples in Lystra and Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, and, by further instructions and the appointment of elders, provided for their growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. iii. 18. To do this was hazardous; for, if they had been discovered in any of these cities by their former enemies, an attempt would doubtless have been made for their destruction. Yet, where there was a hope of doing good, they would not shrink from any hazard; though, at the same time, they would not tempt Providence, by voluntarily encountering peril, without reasonable hope of a beneficial result.

22. *Confirming the souls of the disciples.* Strengthening, encouraging, or animating the souls or minds of the disciples; or, in other words, the disci-

continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ordained

ples themselves. Some have supposed, but apparently without sufficient evidence, that a rite practised in some churches, called confirmation, is here indicated. The more probable interpretation is, that the apostles gave additional instructions to the disciples, who, of necessity, had but partially learned the truths of Christianity, and, by impressing on their minds the consequences of perseverance and apostasy, encouraged them to remain steadfast in the faith. ¶ *We must through much tribulation, &c.* Our Lord, when on earth, forewarned his disciples, that many trials must be encountered by them, if they would become members of his kingdom, or believers in his gospel. So strong was the opposition against him and his doctrine, that no other result could be rationally expected. Yet, he assured them, if they remained faithful, they should escape that more fearful destruction which was soon to fall, with crushing power, upon the Jewish nation. The apostle seems here to refer to the same subject. He prepared the minds of the disciples and fortified their hearts, by admonishing them beforehand that trials must be expected, so that they should not fail or be discouraged when the hour of trial should come. I understand the text to be equivalent to the language of the same apostle, 2 Tim. iii. 12: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." To believe the gospel, and live godly in Christ, is to enter the kingdom of God or of heaven, as that phrase is very generally used in the New Testament; and to suffer persecution is to endure tribulation. "Those who would at that time embrace the gospel of Jesus must expect to meet with great troubles and oppositions. The gospel is called by this title in Acts i. 3, and viii. 12, and elsewhere."—*Pearce*. "The kingdom of God, in this place, as very frequently elsewhere, signifies the community of those who worship God in this world, the Christian community. He who becomes a Christian enters this community. The tribulations are to be understood as those which are

them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

undergone on account of religion."—*Rosenmüller*. For a further illustration of the difficulties to be encountered, in that day, by those who became disciples of Christ, or, which is the same thing, entered into the kingdom of God or of heaven, see note on Matt. xix. 23, 24.

23. *Ordained*. Or appointed, or elected. It is not probable that the word is to be here understood in the technical sense in which it is now generally used. The original denotes that the elders were elected by the lifting up of hands, a form of election still in use. Tyndale translates, "When they had ordained them seniors by election in every congregation." To the same purpose is the paraphrase of Doddridge: "When they had, with the concurrent suffrage of the people, constituted presbyters for them in every church, who might take care of them when they were gone away to other parts," &c. ¶ *Elders*. Literally, presbyters, or aged men. As the apostles were about to depart, they appointed, by consent of the brethren, some of the more aged, experienced, and able, of the number, to advise, encourage, and instruct the remainder. Very probably, the appointment of elders or ministers to the several churches of Christ may be traced to this origin; or, perhaps more properly, *through* this Christian origin, to a similar practice in the Jewish church. So much of the Jewish forms of worship as did not conflict with the spirit of Christianity was freely adopted by the apostles, and incorporated into the Christian forms. ¶ *Prayed with fasting*. The blessing of God was invoked in the most serious and solemn manner upon the feeble disciples, who were now to be left under the guidance of leaders, grave and devout, to be sure, but destitute of apostolical gifts. ¶ *Commended them to the Lord*. Commended them to the divine protection. Of themselves they were weak and feeble; but, by God's blessing, they might hope for strength to endure tribulation, ver. 22, and for further knowledge of the gospel of grace.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church to-

gether, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

## CHAPTER XV.

AND certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be

24. *Pisidia.* See note on Acts xiii.

14. At Antioch in this province, the apostles had previously preached, and had converted not a few. Here they announced their resolution to turn to the Gentiles with the message of salvation. See Acts xiii. 14—51. ¶ *Pamphylia.* See note on Acts xiii. 13. They had passed through this province, on their way from Paphos to Antioch; but it is not certain whether they preached openly at that time. From the fact that, in this city alone, they are said to have preached on their return, ver. 25, it seems probable that they had not previously bestowed that labor upon the inhabitants of Perga.

25. *Preached the word in Perga.* It is safe to conclude that there were few Jews, or none, in Perga, inasmuch as no outrage was offered to the apostles, while preaching there. ¶ *Attalia.* A maritime city of Pamphylia, still existing under the name of Antali. It had its name from Attalus surnamed Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, by whom it was originally founded, or at least raised to distinction.

26. *Sailed to Antioch.* Namely, Antioch in Syria. See Acts xi. 19. ¶ *Whence they had been recommended, &c.* Where they were appointed, and sent forth upon this missionary enterprise, Acts xiii. 2, 3. ¶ *Work which they fulfilled.* Hence it appears that Paul and Barnabas were set apart by their brethren at Antioch for a special purpose, to wit, the mission which they accomplished before their return, and not as apostles, in the technical sense of the term. Indeed, in this sense, Barnabas was never appointed to the apostleship, and Paul was appointed by a higher than human authority. Acts xxvi. 15—20; Gal. i. 11—17.

27. *Rehearsed.* Related the events, for the information of the church.

¶ *All that God had done, &c.* His aid in enabling them to perform miracles, his blessing upon their word to the conversion of many souls, his preservation of their lives when in utmost peril, and his general care over them during their journey. All the blessings they had experienced were properly referred to God as the giver of all good things. ¶ *Opened the door of faith, &c.* Had clearly manifested his will, that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and believed by them.

28. *There.* At Antioch. ¶ *Abode long time.* How long is not definitely known. Some suppose they remained there from two to five years. It is not unlikely that, during the period of their general residence in Antioch, Paul performed some of those shorter journeys to which he refers in his epistles, but which are not particularly narrated by the historian.

## CHAPTER XV.

1. *Certain men.* These men were doubtless Jewish converts to Christianity. They are sometimes styled Judaizing teachers, or teachers insisting that the law of Moses ought to be punctually observed, in connection with the precepts of Christianity. Indeed, they regarded this as an indispensable requisite to salvation. They did not object to the admission of Gentiles into the church, provided they would enter through the gate of Moses. But they protested with much earnestness against granting fellowship to any, unless they would submit to circumcision, as required by Moses, and observe the precepts of his law. On the contrary,



circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

## 2 When therefore Paul and Bar-

Paul insisted that the ceremonial law of Moses had no binding force on the Gentiles; and consequently, when they became converts to Christianity, they were under obligation to obey the precepts of Christ, and none other. Indications of this difference of opinion between the early disciples are of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. The Jews seemed unable to understand that a law, confessedly given by divine authority, could be of temporary character, or be superseded by any other. And, even after their conversion to Christianity, they were unwilling to relinquish any portion of their former veneration for the law, ceremonial and ritual as well as moral; nor could they freely extend the hand of fellowship to any who disregarded the precepts of that law. Paul devotes many arguments, in his epistles, to the removal of this Jewish prejudice. But, notwithstanding all his efforts, it long remained a subject of contention between the two great branches of the Christian church. In this chapter, we have a narration of one controversy on this point, greater and more serious doubtless than any which had preceded it, and which, by mutual consent of parties, was referred for decision to the apostles at Jerusalem. It may be remarked here, as well as elsewhere, that, although the parties seem to have cheerfully acquiesced in that decision, the general controversy was not ended thereby; but it afterwards occasioned much trouble to the brethren. ¶ *Came down from Judea.* That is, to Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas were dwelling, Acts xiv. 28. ¶ *Taught the brethren.* The Christians; especially that portion of them who were converts from the Gentiles. ¶ *Except ye be circumcised, &c.* As circumcision was the seal of the Mosaic covenant, the grand distinguishing mark of the Jewish nation, it is here probably put for general obedience to the Mosaic law. Different terms are used in ver. 5; but the meaning is manifestly the same. These Gentile believers had probably never been proselytes. On their profession of faith in Christ, they were admitted to the church, without circum-

nabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and

cision, or other conformity to the ritual or ceremonial law. The Judaizing teachers instructed them that they lacked one important qualification for the Messiah's kingdom: unless they would conform to the law of Moses, they could have no portion in the Messiah, or the blessings of his reign. ¶ *Ye cannot be saved.* "This is not to be understood of final salvation, but of that salvation or happiness which the Jews sought through circumcision. This happiness consisted in the fact, that the circumcised were received into covenant with God, and became incorporated with the people of God. Hence these Jewish Christians taught those at Antioch, Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot enjoy the blessings which God has promised to his people."—*Rosenmüller*. Substantially to the same effect, unless I misapprehend the meaning, is the remark of Livermore: "Ye cannot be saved, that is, enjoy the favors of the Messiah's kingdom, and inherit the promises of God attached to the new covenant made with his people."

2. *Paul and Barnabas.* The great apostle to the Gentiles and his fellow-laborer withstood these Judaizing teachers, and insisted that the Gentile converts were never bound by the law of Moses; and that, as they had been made free in Christ, they ought not now to be brought under bondage. See Gal. v. 1—6. It was proper that they should do so, not only on behalf of their weaker brethren, who were not so fully enlightened on this point, but also in vindication of their own conduct; for it is manifest that they had admitted Gentiles to an equal participation of the benefits of the church, upon their profession of faith in Christ, without circumcision, or obedience to the requisitions of the ceremonial law. ¶ *No small dissension and disputation.* The word rendered *dissension* sometimes denotes the effervescence of angry and unholy passions. But it seems here to be used in its milder sense—that of earnest controversy. Doubtless the disputation was warm and earnest. The Jews were peculiarly sensitive on the point in controversy, and could not

certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to

abide the slightest appearance of disrespect to Moses: they even regarded it as blasphemous to suggest that his law could be superseded by any other. And this prejudice was not wholly obliterated from the minds of the converts from Judaism to Christianity. They regarded the gospel as designed to complete the law and make it perfect, rather than to abrogate it; and hence they naturally insisted that disciples were bound to obey both. On the other hand, Paul saw clearly that the ceremonial law was to be abolished; and he was jealous of any improper impositions upon the Gentile converts. He regarded himself as, in some sort, their earthly protector; and he would not consent that any yoke of bondage should be placed upon their necks. Where the two parties were so determined and fixed in their opposite opinions, there was little hope of an agreement by personal disputation. With a commendable spirit of accommodation, therefore, it was mutually agreed to take advice of the apostles, the highest ecclesiastical tribunal on earth. ¶ *And certain other of them.* That is, of the disciples; perhaps some of both parties; unquestionably some of the Judaizing party; so that both sides of the question at issue might be fairly presented to the apostles. ¶ *Unto the apostles,* &c. The authority of the apostles was acknowledged throughout the church. It was known that they had been personally instructed by the Lord Jesus, and that they had the promise of divine aid, in the establishment and government of the church. They seem to have remained generally together at Jerusalem, from which place they could most easily oversee and direct the operations of the whole church. Paul had also been divinely instructed, and duly commissioned as an apostle; but this was not so generally known

Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

and acknowledged, until, by his subsequent energy, devotion, and success in the apostleship, he demonstrated the legitimacy of his authority.

3. *Being brought on their way,* &c. By this, some understand that the church made provision for their journey; and others, that the brethren accompanied them on their way towards Jerusalem. Perhaps both interpretations may be true to some extent. ¶ *Phenice.* See note on Acts xi. 19. ¶ *Samaria.* See note on John iv. 4. Both these places were situated on the direct route, by land, from Antioch to Jerusalem. ¶ *Declaring the conversion,* &c. Wherever they found brethren, they addressed them, and encouraged their hearts by the assurance that God had granted conversion to multitudes of the Gentiles. ¶ *Caused great joy,* &c. The brethren rejoiced in the prosperity of the gospel; and they rejoiced the more, when informed that the Gentiles could enter the gospel kingdom without first being proselyted to Judaism, or subsequently conforming to its rites; because they well knew that many of the Jewish forms were distasteful to the Gentiles, and operated as a hindrance to their acceptance of Christianity when thus cumbered. Probably most of the brethren in Phenice and Samaria were not Jews.

4. *Received of the church.* Received as Christian brethren, and hospitably entertained by the church. ¶ *That God had done with them.* Or, by them. Paul and Barnabas related to the brethren at Jerusalem the incidents and results of their ministry during the time of their absence from the holy city. But all their success was attributed to God: they boasted not of their own labors.

5. *There rose up,* &c. Some have supposed these to be the words of Paul, descriptive of the recent events at An-

6 ¶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago,

God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us :

tioch, and announcing the question upon which the judgment of the apostles was desired. But the more probable interpretation is, that, when Paul had declared to the brethren the glorious effusion of divine grace upon the Gentiles, in the conversion of so many, certain believers in Jerusalem, who had been Pharisees, and who retained their zeal for the law, insisted on the necessity that these converts should observe the law of Moses. Like those who went from Judea to Antioch, and indeed belonging to the same class, they objected to the admission of Gentiles to equal privileges with themselves, unless they came in through the door of the law. ¶ *It was needful.* Indispensably necessary. See ver. 1. ¶ *To circumcise them, and to command,* &c. It was required by the Judaizing party, not only that the Gentile converts should be circumcised, but that they should observe the whole law. Yet, as circumcision was such a prominent feature in the law, it is put for the whole in ver. 1.

6. *The apostles and elders came together.* This has sometimes been called the first general council; and perhaps the name is not altogether inappropriate. Yet its proceedings were so exceedingly unlike those of subsequent councils, that it seems almost improper to call it by the same name. ¶ *To consider of this matter.* To inquire into all the circumstances, hear the arguments and testimony, and then decide.

7. *Much disputing.* "Or rather, much inquiry or deliberation. With our word *disputing* we commonly connect the idea of heat and anger. This is not necessarily implied in the word used here. It might have been calm, solemn, deliberate inquiry; and there is no evidence that it was conducted with undue warmth or anger."—*Barnes.* The discussion, at this time, was probably among the elders, who had assembled with the apostles, ver. 6. Paul and Barnabas seem to have remained silent, until called upon for

their testimony, ver. 12. The case was then summed up by James, ver. 13—21. ¶ *Peter rose up.* In this case, certainly, the forwardness of Peter cannot be regarded as misplaced. He was one of the eldest of the apostles, and entitled, for that reason, to be heard with attention. Besides, he had personal experience in this matter, and had received special communications of the Spirit in regard to it. He therefore could speak with more confidence than any other of the Eleven. It may be observed here, that Peter does not claim precedence of his brethren in authority; he speaks as a member of the body, instructing, counselling, and persuading, but not appearing to command. He did not even preside over their deliberations; but this office was manifestly performed by James. ¶ *A good while ago.* Several years. Some suppose as much as ten years. See ch. x. Sufficient time had elapsed to show whether a conformity to the Mosaic code was essentially necessary to the Christian character of the converts in Cesarea. ¶ *God made choice among us,* &c. The divine will, selecting Peter as the agent in this case, was sufficiently indicated by the visions seen by Cornelius and himself. ¶ *That the Gentiles,* &c. Namely, Cornelius, and his household and friends. It was well to appeal to this case, not only as the first of its kind, but as one directly superintended throughout by the Spirit.

8. *Bare them witness,* &c. Gave testimony to the sincerity and thoroughness of their conversion, by imparting the Holy Ghost, *even as he did* to the Jewish converts. The argument of Peter seems to be this: God will not give the Holy Ghost to any who are not effectually converted; but he bestowed this gift on Cornelius and his friends in Cesarea, who were neither circumcised nor obedient to the ritual law; such circumcision and obedience, therefore, are not necessary to true conversion,

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe, that through

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

12 ¶ Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

and ought not to be imposed on Gentile disciples.

9. *Put no difference, &c.* He made no distinction between us who had been circumcised and had kept the law of Moses, and the Gentiles who had done neither; but, by the bestowment of spiritual gifts, signified his equal approbation of both. ¶ *Purifying their hearts by faith.* They were regarded as impure by the Jews, because they had not conformed to the law. But God regarded them as purified by exercising faith in the Lord Jesus. The true criterion of purity henceforth was to be a faith working by love and sanctifying the heart, instead of an outward observance of forms and ceremonies. See note on Acts xiii. 39.

10. *Why tempt ye God?* "Why do you insist on further terms as necessary, where the divine will is already sufficiently declared; and go about to tempt God, by a proposition of imposing on the neck of the disciples a grievous and burdensome yoke, which neither our fathers nor we have been able cheerfully and regularly to bear, without being exposed to great inconveniences and many transgressions in consequence of it?"—*Doddridge*. Most recent commentators substantially agree in this interpretation. By tempting God is understood resisting his will; namely, refusing to admit to Christian communion, men whom God had indicated as true believers by miraculous gifts, unless they would submit to conditions which he had not imposed. ¶ *To put a yoke.* To impose a bondage or a burden. A yoke has for ages been an emblem of bondage. See Jer. xxviii. 1—12. Subjection to the ritual law is called "the yoke of bondage," Gal. v. 1. See note on Matt. xxiii. 4. ¶ *Which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.* Even the Jews, accustomed as they were from infancy to the rites and ceremonies of the law, found it difficult, and

even impossible, to observe them, especially as they had been multiplied by the religious teachers. As this observance had been so inconvenient to the Jews, who revered the law, it was unreasonable to expect it of the Gentiles, who had none of that veneration, but had previously entertained a prejudice against it, on account of the overbearing and unfriendly conduct of the Jewish nation.

11. *We believe, &c.* Peter here expresses an opinion, which seems not previously to have been suggested by either party; namely, that even the Jewish converts need not observe the Mosaic ritual. He believed that neither Jew nor Gentile was to be saved in consequence of circumcision or obedience to the law, but that all alike should be saved by grace manifested in Jesus and his gospel. His argument is this: Even we who are Jews are to be saved by grace, not by the works of the law; and it is wrong to require of the Gentiles, as essential to their salvation, the ceremonial obedience which we do not consider essential to our own. See Gal. ii. 15—21; Eph. ii. 8—15.

12. *All the multitude.* This assembly of the apostles was not a private conclave, but an open council, at which were present the elders, ver. 6, and many brethren of the church. All felt a deep interest in the decision of the question at issue, and in that decision they seem to have acted with the apostles and elders, ver. 22, 23. ¶ *Gave audience.* Attended, or hearkened, or listened with attention. ¶ *Declaring what miracles, &c.* They might have alleged the divine command, received by revelation; but they preferred an appeal to facts within the knowledge of many besides themselves. They mentioned therefore the miracles wrought among the Gentiles by them, as an evidence that God owned and blessed them as true servants of Christ, notwithstanding they a limited Gentiles

13 ¶ And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me.

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

to the church, without conformity to the Jewish law. This was urged as a proof that such conformity was not required by God of the Gentiles, and ought not to be required by men.

13. *James answered.* This was James the Less, the son of Alphaeus. See note on Matt. x. 3. James the Greater, son of Zebedee and brother of John, had previously been slain. See note on Acts xii. 2. ¶ *Hearken unto me.* James here speaks with authority, as the chief among his brethren. "This James, whom the ancients, on account of the excellence of his virtue, surnamed the Just, was the first that received the episcopate of the church at Jerusalem. But Clement, in the sixth book of his Institutions, represents it thus: 'Peter, and James, and John, after the ascension of our Saviour, though they had been preferred by our Lord, did not contend for the honor, but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem.'"—*Eusebius*, B. II. ch. i. Perhaps he presided in this council, as the principal officer of the largest and most important branch of the church then in existence. At the least, the pretension of the Papists, that Peter was constituted Prince of the Apostles by our Lord, and that he exercised authority over them, is shown to be without foundation, by the circumstances recorded in this case.

14. *Simeon.* This name is Hebrew; but, in the Greek language, as well as in the English, it is generally written Simon. This was the original name of the apostle who was surnamed Peter, and commonly known by the latter name. See notes on Matt. x. 2; xvi. 17, 18. ¶ *To take out of them, &c.* To convert the Gentiles, and make them obedient children and true worshippers. Acts x. xi. The Jews had formerly been the chosen people of God. In like manner, God had now chosen others, both Jews and Gentiles, without distinction of nation, who, by living soberly, righteously, and godly,

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

should be unto him a peculiar people. Tit. ii. 11—14. This point James regards as settled by the testimony of Peter, who was universally acknowledged in the church as an inspired apostle, and who, in preaching to the Gentiles in the case referred to, acted under the immediate direction and superintendence of the Holy Spirit. The implied argument is, While you admit that a few Gentiles were converted to Christianity by the ministry of Peter, and became worthy and acceptable disciples, without conformity to the ritual law, you should not be surprised that God has so abundantly blessed the labors of Paul and Barnabas, in converting multitudes of the same class; and that he will accept them as true disciples, without such conformity.

15. *To this agree the words of the prophets.* See Amos ix. 11, 12. For the satisfaction of the Jewish converts, an appeal was wisely made to the scriptures which they firmly believed were given by inspiration of God. This was a constant practice of our Lord and his apostles. The passage quoted is generally understood as having primary reference to a season of temporal prosperity, succeeding a judgment upon the Jewish nation; and to have been applied by James, in an accommodated sense, to the case under consideration. His main design was to show that God had a regard and blessings for other nations besides the Jews.

16. *After this.* That is, after the execution of the judgment, or the destruction of Israel by their enemies. ¶ *The tabernacle of David.* House is often put for household, in the scriptures. So, here, *tabernacle*, or tent, or dwelling place of David, signifies the family or people of David. To rebuild the tabernacle is to reestablish the nation of David, or the Jews, in their own land. ¶ *Which is fallen down.* Destroyed or scattered by foreign power. ¶ *Build again the ruins thereof.* Restore it to its ancient prosperity and soundness.

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

17. *That the residue of men, &c.* The rest of mankind, besides the Jews; the Gentiles generally. "The expression means, that, in the great prosperity of the Jews, after their return, they should extend the influence of their religion to other nations; that is, as James applies it, the Gentiles might be brought to the privileges of the children of God."—*Barnes*. ¶ *All the Gentiles.* All who were not Jews.

18. *Known unto God, &c.* God is omniscient. He sees the end from the beginning. He sees not only events, but the causes of their accomplishment. He is not liable to disappointment. No unforeseen contingency can occur, to prevent the accomplishment of his purposes. Whatever he predicts, therefore, is certain of fulfilment. As he predicted the admission of Gentiles with the Jews as participants of his grace, all resistance on the part of Jews would be utterly vain; for in his own way, and by means of his own appointment, God would assuredly bestow the promised blessing. It was idle to prescribe such conditions of discipleship as the Jews desired. God had commenced gathering the Gentiles, without compliance with such conditions; and he would certainly execute his purpose, according to his original design, without regard to the peculiar prejudices or desires of any one nation.

19. *My sentence is, &c.* Literally, I judge. Though this form of speech would be suitable for a judge pronouncing a final decree, yet James appears to have used it rather as expressive of his opinion, than as an authoritative sentence. And in this sense he seems to have been understood by his brethren; for the decision of the council was made by general consent of the apostles and elders, and the whole church, ver. 22. ¶ *That we trouble not them, &c.* That we do not impose on them the yoke of the law, but leave them to the enjoyment of Christian lib-

erty; that we do not molest or disturb them, nor deny them our fellowship, if they have truly turned to God.

20 But that we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

erty; that we do not molest or disturb them, nor deny them our fellowship, if they have truly turned to God.

20. *That we write unto them.* For the purpose of making known the decision concerning the law of Moses, and also of exhorting their brethren to beware of certain easily besetting sins; sins to which they were peculiarly exposed in consequence of their former habits, both civil and religious. ¶ *Abstain, &c.* Four particular sins are named, which the Gentile converts are solemnly cautioned to avoid. ¶ *Pollutions of idols.* "From meats offered to idols," ver. 29. In the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles, sacrifices of beasts were offered. See Acts xiv. 13. And it was customary, after the sacrifice, and after the priest had taken his share, for the person who made the offering to sell the remainder in the market, or eat it with his friends, either in the temple or in his own house. And it was understood that all who knowingly partook of such sacrifices, acknowledged the idol to whom it had been offered; and the feast was in fact regarded as a part of the ceremony of worship. This matter is discussed by Paul in 1 Cor. viii. 4—13. As the Gentile converts had long been accustomed to this practice, it was feared that they might continue it, to the grief and possible injury of their brethren; and they were exhorted to refrain from it altogether. ¶ *From fornication.* "This is mentioned in connection with idolatry, because the worship of the heathen temples was often polluted by this vice, and the professed acts of religion itself mingled with the most horrible licentiousness. The tendencies to this sin in the dissolute cities of the East, covered as it was by a professedly sacred sanction, were so strong, that the caution to the Gentile disciples was by no means superfluous."—*Livermore*. ¶ *From things strangled.* That is, from animals killed, without shedding

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own

company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles, and elders, and brethren, *send*

their blood; esteemed a luxury by many of the Gentiles, but an utter abomination to the Jews. ¶ *And from blood.* The Jews had been commanded to abstain from blood, on the ground that it contained the life. Lev. xvii. 11, 14. But the Gentiles frequently drank the blood of their sacrifices, and covenants were often sealed by the drinking of blood. This practice, as well as partaking of blood in any form, was prohibited to the Gentile converts, partly out of respect to the feelings of the Jews, and partly because the practice was wrong and hurtful in itself. The following general remarks, concerning the prohibitions mentioned in this verse, are worthy of consideration. "The influence of James effected a discreet and temperate compromise; Judaism, as it were, capitulated on honorable terms. The Christians were to be left to that freedom enjoyed by the proselytes of the gate; but they were enjoined to pay so much respect to those with whom they were associated in religious worship, as to abstain from those practices which were most offensive to their habits. The partaking of the sacrificial feasts in the idolatrous temples was so plainly repugnant to the first principles either of the Jewish or the Christian theism, as to be altogether irreconcilable with the professed opinions of a proselyte to either. The using of things strangled, and blood, for food, appears to have been the most revolting to Jewish feeling; and perhaps among the dietetic regulations of the Mosaic law, none, in a southern climate, was more conducive to health. The other article in this celebrated decree was a moral prohibition, but not improbably directed more particularly against the dissolute rites of those Syrian and Asiatic religions in which prostitution formed an essential part, and which prevailed to a great extent in the countries bordering upon Palestine."

21. *For Moses, &c.* The law of Moses was regularly read in the synagogues of the Jews; in which law, the

prohibitions here mentioned are urgently enforced. Idolatry, and all which relates to it, Moses had condemned, under severe penalties. The Jews were constantly reminded of these things by the reading of the law, and they could not be expected to associate on terms of intimacy and fellowship with those whom they considered guilty of deadly sin. While, therefore, the Gentile converts were not required to obey the positive ceremonial or ritual precepts of the law, they were required to avoid even the appearance of those idolatrous practices, which were regarded by the Jews with absolute horror. ¶ *Of old time.* Literally, from ancient generations. ¶ *Them that preach him.* Or, make known his precepts, by reading or expounding the law, both which were ordinarily done on the sabbath.

22. *Then pleased it, &c.* The advice of James seems to have given general satisfaction, and was adopted not only by the apostles and elders, to whom the question was particularly referred, but by the whole body of the church then present. ¶ *Chosen men of their own company.* To give due solemnity to the proceeding, they deputed two of the "chief men among the brethren," to convey their decision to the parties immediately interested. ¶ *Judas surnamed Barsabas.* Nothing is known with certainty concerning this individual. Some have conjectured, but others deny, that he was the candidate for the apostleship, mentioned in Acts i. 23. ¶ *Silas.* This person afterwards became the travelling companion of Paul, ver. 34, 40, and is frequently mentioned in the subsequent portion of this history.

23. *The apostles, &c.* The letters were written in the name of the whole Christian brotherhood at Jerusalem, to indicate their unanimity of opinion upon the point decided. ¶ *Send greeting.* A phrase in customary use, as a salutation, expressing a desire for the welfare and happiness of the person

greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment:*

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with

addressed. The English word *greeting* is often used in this sense; but, in legal documents, it has a technical meaning, of a somewhat different character. ¶ *Antioch.* The city where the question was introduced. ¶ *Syria.* The province of which Antioch was the capital. ¶ *Cilicia.* The province adjoining Syria on the north-west. In both these places, lying in the vicinity of Antioch, the question had doubtless been discussed, perhaps with warmth. It was well that it should be put at rest as speedily as possible.

24. *Certain which went out from us.* The same who are mentioned in ver. 1. ¶ *Have troubled you with words.* Have disturbed your minds with doctrines productive of uneasiness and dissension. ¶ *Subverting your souls,* or, unsettling your minds, concerning the true requirements of the gospel. ¶ *To whom we gave no such commandment.* Whatever *opinion* the brethren at Jerusalem might have previously entertained on the subject of dispute, they promptly and positively disavow having sent any person to Antioch, to produce confusion among the disciples. Concerning the persons who thus went from Jerusalem to Antioch, without command, Whitty remarks, that they "went out from Judea, and were men going out as from the apostles; and therefore St. John saith of them, they went out from us, but they were not of us. 1 John ii. 19." The form of expression is similar, to be sure; but I apprehend that the persons indicated by John were by no means identical with those who are here mentioned.

25. *It seemed good, &c.* The modesty of this address is worthy of attention and imitation. Far different, in this respect, have been the missives of

our beloved Barnabas and Paul

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood,

many professed servants of Christ, who, though destitute of apostolical authority, have endeavored to "lord it over God's heritage."

26. *Men that have hazarded their lives, &c.* See ch. xiv. The reference here is to Barnabas and Paul, as is manifest from the construction of the original; and it is a noble testimonial and commendation by the assembled apostles, elders, and brethren of the church. It may be regarded as a confirmation of their proceedings in the establishment of Gentile churches, without requiring conformity to the Jewish ritual; for they acknowledge them to have been laboring in the cause of Jesus Christ.

27. *The same things.* Namely, the same which were contained in the letter, ver. 23. ¶ *By mouth.* By words. They can more fully explain the character of the prohibitions, and the reasons upon which they are founded.

28. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.* They believed themselves to be guided, in their decision, by the influence of the Holy Spirit. They had full confidence in the assurance of their Master, that, in the establishment and organization of the church, they should have divine direction and assistance. See notes on Matt. xviii. 18—20; John xvi. 13. ¶ *Lay upon you no greater burden.* Impose on you no other restraint. ¶ *Necessary things.* Necessary to the peace and harmony of the two branches of the church, and necessary also because the Gentile brethren were peculiarly exposed to be turned aside from the faith, and to relapse into idolatry by any indulgence in the practices prohibited.

29. *Ye shall do well.* You will perform your duty, and do all which is



and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle.

31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in

necessary on your part to end the contention. ¶ *Fare ye well.* Literally, be ye strong, or well; a very significant salutation, still in common use.

30. *Gathered the multitude.* Assembled the church. Very probably, there were present others who were favorably inclined towards Christianity, but delayed an open profession until it should be determined whether they were to be held bound to the ritual law.

31. *Rejoiced for the consolation.* For the relief granted from the burdensome ceremonies of the law, and for a settlement of the question which had so much disturbed them. This was a rich consolation to them, and they rejoiced.

32. *Being prophets.* That is, teachers in the church: preaching was often styled prophesying. See note on Acts xi. 27.

33. *Let go in peace.* The controversy in the church at Antioch had been amicably settled, and the messengers from Jerusalem were dismissed with mutual professions of love and Christian affection. But Paul had occasion to discuss the same question, subsequently, with other persons, though it was thus quietly settled in Antioch.

34. *Notwithstanding, &c.* This whole verse is wanting in several ancient MSS., but is retained by Griesbach and other critics. Whether or not the verse be an interpolation, it is manifest from ver. 40 that Silas remained at Antioch, as here asserted.

35. *Continued in Antioch, &c.* How long Paul and Barnabas continued to

peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding, it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 ¶ And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good

preach in Antioch, at this time, is not known. Some suppose the event described in Gal. ii. 11—14, occurred during this period; but it is much more probable that its occurrence was at an earlier date, before the decision of the council at Jerusalem. ¶ *With many others.* Other preachers also labored in this important city; probably the same who are named Acts xiii. 1.

36. *Paul said, &c.* The enterprise suggested by Paul, of revisiting the churches planted among the Gentiles, was characteristic of him, and highly beneficial to them. As yet they had received light but partially, and they needed further instructions. They needed advice, also, how they might successfully resist the bigotry of the Jews on the one hand, and the idolatrous practices and influences of the Gentiles on the other. Paul regarded the quality of converts more than the number; he preferred to instruct a few thoroughly, that they might be steadfast in their profession and walk worthy their holy vocation, rather than seek to acquire fame to himself by an array of numbers, without respect to their qualifications. ¶ *How they do.* What is their religious or spiritual condition.

37. *Determined, &c.* More correctly, chose, or desired. Tyndale translates, "gave counsel." It was very natural that he should desire to take Mark, who was his nephew, Col. iv. 10, as a companion on this journey.

38. *Paul thought not good, &c.* He judged it inexpedient; he had not full confidence in the stability of Mark, in-

to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus.

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by

asmuch as he had turned back from the perils of the former journey, for reasons not satisfactory to the apostle. ¶ *Departed from them*, &c. See Acts xiii. 13. ¶ *To the work*. Namely, of the ministry.

39. *The contention was so sharp*. The original, *paroxysmos* (παροξυσμός) is the word from which is derived the English paroxysm. "It may denote any excitement of mind, and is used in a good sense, Heb. x. 24. It here means evidently a violent altercation, that resulted in their separation for a time, and in their engaging in different spheres of labor."—*Barnes*. When a historian displays perpetually the virtues of his heroes, and anxiously conceals all their imperfections, he necessarily excites a suspicion concerning his credibility. But when, as here, he exhibits their imperfections just as freely and distinctly as their virtues, we have no reason to doubt his honesty and truth. It is characteristic of the sacred writers that they make no effort for concealment, nor do they apologize for the imperfections they record. They describe the facts just as they occurred, and are willing that men should appear to be men, without attempting to transform them into superhuman beings. ¶ *Cyprus*. See note on Acts iv. 36. This island had been the former residence of Barnabas, and it was natural that he should wish to communicate the blessings of the gospel to his kindred and friends.

40. *Paul chose Silas*. When Jesus sent out his disciples to preach, he "sent them two and two," Luke x. 1. His apostles practised according to the same rule. In the arduous and perilous enterprise of preaching the gospel to the heathen, they felt their need of some trusty and faithful friend, on whose sympathy, advice, and assistance, they might rely. Hence we sel-

the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**T**HEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and behold a certain disciple was there, named Timo-

dom find an apostle travelling without at least one chosen companion. ¶ *Being recommended*, &c. Or commended. The enterprise which they undertook was consecrated by the prayers of the church, and the divine favor was invoked on them and their labors, as on the former occasion. Acts xiii. 1—3; xiv. 26.

41. *Syria and Cilicia*. See note on ver. 23. Paul had preached in both these provinces, and many had been converted. ¶ *Confirming the churches*. Strengthening the brethren in the faith of the gospel. See note on Acts xiv. 22. Some give a special interpretation of this phrase. "Confirming and strengthening the Christians, in the opinion of its not being necessary that the Gentiles should be circumcised. See ver. 30—32."—*Pearce*. This interpretation is countenanced by the fact that the letter of the apostles was directed to these churches in particular. See ver. 23.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1. *Derbe and Lystra*. See note on Acts xiv. 6. Passing through Syria and Cilicia, Acts xv. 41, Paul and Silas entered Lycaonia, bordering on the north of Cilicia, and separated from it by a range of mountains called Mount Taurus. ¶ *A certain disciple was there, named Timothy*. That is, Timothy. It is not asserted distinctly in which of the before-named cities Timothy resided; but, from ver. 2, it seems probable that his residence was at Lystra. This disciple was subsequently regarded by Paul with peculiar affection; and to him the two epistles, bearing his name, were addressed. ¶ *A certain woman which was a Jewess*. Her name was Eunice, and her mother's, Lois: both are mentioned by the apostle as patterns of faith and goodness. 2 Tim. i. 5. Marriages between the Jews and Gentiles

theus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed, but his father *was* a Greek :

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

had been forbidden, Ezra ix. 12; but the prohibition was sometimes disregarded by those who lived in the cities of the Gentiles. ¶ *And believed.* That is, was a Christian believer. Very probably she was converted by Paul, on his previous visit. ¶ *A Greek.* A Gentile in every respect, it would seem; for, if a proselyte, he would have been circumcised, and would have caused the same rite to be performed upon his son, ver. 3.

2. *Which.* Rather, who; meaning Timothy. ¶ *Was well reported of, &c.* Had a good reputation among the Christians in that vicinity. The reasonable presumption is that his moral character was pure and exemplary; and this agrees with the general testimony of the scriptures concerning him. His knowledge exceeded that of his young associates, for he had been carefully educated by his mother and grandmother. 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15.

3. *Him would Paul have, &c.* Timothy was probably very young; for, years afterwards, when he had been consecrated as a minister, Paul exhorts him, "Let no man despise thy youth." 1 Tim. iv. 12. He seems not to have contemplated devoting himself to the ministry. But Paul perceived in him certain indications that he would be serviceable to the church; and, desiring to impart such spiritual instruction as should be necessary to qualify him for the work, elected him as a companion. ¶ *And circumcised him.* The reason here assigned is, that all the Jews knew that his father was a Gentile, and of course that he had not been circumcised. It has excited some surprise, that Paul should thus conform to the prejudices of the Jews so soon after his manful resistance to them. The explanation generally given is this: "What Paul did here was only to avoid giving offence to the Jews, which they would most probably have taken if his fellow-laborer had not been circumcised; and this was not contrary to the *decrees* or *judgments* of the council, which he was then delivering to the churches;

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek :

for the judgment concerning circumcision was only that it was not *necessary* for the Gentile converts to be circumcised: it did not forbid them to be so, if they chose it or consented to it, which probably was the case of Timothy. But it may be asked, how Paul's behavior on this occasion is to be reconciled with what he says in Gal. v. 2: 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.' To which the answer is, that Paul meant this of such as caused themselves to be circumcised upon a supposition that it was *necessary*, contrary to the judgment of the apostles and elders in council. Such persons sought to be *justified by the law*, as he there says in ver. 4; and therefore they were fallen from grace, or from the grace, that is, of the gospel."—*Pearce*. This explanation may be sufficiently satisfactory. Yet an additional consideration may not be useless. The decision of the apostles referred exclusively to converts from among the Gentiles; it did not interfere, in the slightest degree, with the custom of the Jewish converts. The father of Timothy was a Greek; and, having the legal control of his son, had never allowed him to conform to the customs of the Jews. But the mother was a Jewess; and, through her, Timothy was a son of Abraham, and bound by the covenant of circumcision. It is reasonable therefore to conclude that Paul caused him to be circumcised as a Jew, not as a Gentile convert. Whatever opinion he entertained concerning the perpetual observance of circumcision among the Jewish converts, this matter had not been decided; and he did not choose that it should now be agitated. But, knowing that the Jews would be highly scandalized if he should associate with an uncircumcised Jew (and such was Timothy, by one of his parents), he readily conformed to their views of propriety; the more readily, because he did not thereby abridge the liberty of the Gentile converts. In this view of the case, Paul's conduct in circum-

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region

cising Timothy, and utterly refusing to permit Titus to be circumcised, Gal. ii. 3, was perfectly consistent; because the circumcision of Timothy as a Jew might be proper, while in regard to Titus, who was a Greek, without admixture of Jewish blood, the performance of this rite would be understood as an abandonment of principle, and an acknowledgment that Gentile converts were bound by the Mosaic ritual. On any other ground, it seems difficult to account satisfactorily for the conduct of the apostle on the two occasions here mentioned. ¶ *They knew all that his father was a Greek.* Equivalent to, they all knew he had not been circumcised; the father, being a Gentile, would not permit it.

4. *They delivered them.* Paul and Silas delivered or communicated to the brethren in the cities which they visited. ¶ *The decrees, &c.* See Acts xv. 23—29. ¶ *To keep.* To obey; to be governed by.

5. *Established in the faith, &c.* Confirmed in the belief of the gospel, and encouraged in their adherence to it, by the mild and conciliatory spirit of the communication from the apostles. ¶ *And increased.* One principal impediment to the progress of the gospel was an unwillingness to submit to the bondage of the law. This was no longer required; and an accession of converts was the result.

6. *Phrygia.* This "was the largest kingdom of Asia Minor; it had Bithynia north, Pisidia and Lycia south, Galatia and Cappadocia east, and Lydia and Mysia west."—*Calmet.* ¶ *Region of Galatia.* "A province in Asia Minor, having Pontus on the east, Bithynia and Paphlagonia north, Cappadocia and Phrygia south, and Phrygia west. The Gauls, having invaded Asia Minor in several bodies, conquered this country, settled in it, and called it Galatia,

of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia;

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul

which, in Greek, signifies Gaul."—*Calmet.* The Gauls who invaded this land, and subsequently occupied it, are said to have been of at least three different tribes. Among them were mingled many Jews also. So great a diversity of character in the inhabitants has been supposed to account for the religious contentions so sternly rebuked by Paul, in his epistle to the church which was there organized. ¶ *Were forbidden, &c.* Either by vision or otherwise, the divine will was communicated to them. No reason is assigned. The conjecture is not improbable, that God designed a more wide diffusion of the gospel, and therefore sent Paul into other cities rather than those which he had twice before visited. ¶ *Asia.* Supposed here to mean what is called proconsular Asia; in which were situated Ephesus, and the other cities whose churches are addressed in Revelation, chapters i. ii. iii.

7. *Mysia.* "A province of Asia Minor; bounded north by the Propontis, west by the Ægean Sea, south by Lydia, and east by Bithynia."—*Calmet.* ¶ *Assayed.* Attempted. ¶ *Bithynia.* "A province of Asia Minor, in the northern part of that peninsula, on the shore of the Euxine, having Phrygia and Galatia to the south. It is directly opposite to Constantinople."—*Calmet.* The metropolis of this province was the city of Nice, where a famous council was held A.D. 325, at which the Nicene Creed was adopted.

8. *Troas.* "A city of Phrygia, or of Mysia, on the Hellespont, between Troy north, and Asses south. Sometimes the name of Troas (or the Troad) signifies the whole country of the Trojans, the province where the ancient city of Troy had stood. But, in the New Testament, the word Troas signifies a city of this name, sometimes called Antigonía and Alexandria."—

in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called

us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part

*Calmet.* Paul visited this place again at a later date. Acts xx. 5, 6.

9. *A vision.* See note on Acts ix. 10. As this vision was seen in the night, it may have been in the form of a dream. ¶ *A man of Macedonia.* Resembling a Macedonian in appearance. Macedonia was a country of Greece, having Thrace north, Thessaly south, Epirus west, and the Ægean Sea east. This is the first country in Europe, in which the gospel is known to have been preached. The kingdom of Macedonia was very famous under Philip, and his son Alexander the Great. It subsequently became a Roman province, before it was visited by Paul. ¶ *Come over, &c.* That is, come and preach the gospel to us also. The divine will was as clearly communicated to Paul by this vision, as to Peter and Cornelius by those which they saw, on the eve of their first interview. Acts x. 1—34.

10. *Immediately we endeavored.* Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but, as on a former occasion, prepared at once to enter upon the labor assigned him. Acts xxvi. 19. The expression, *we endeavored*, indicates that the historian was a companion of Paul. As this is the first instance of its occurrence, it is supposed that Luke joined the company of missionaries at about this period. Almost the whole of the subsequent history, in this book, appears to have been written by an eye-witness. ¶ *Assuredly gathering, &c.* Or, confidently concluding this to be the meaning of the vision.

11. *Loosing from, &c.* A nautical phrase indicating departure. See note on Acts xiii. 13. ¶ *Samothracia.* "An island in the Ægean Sea; so called because it was peopled by Samians and Thracians. It was an asylum for fugitives and criminals."—*Calmet.* ¶ *Neapolis.* This new city, as the name signifies, now called Napoli, was on the seacoast in Macedonia, near the borders

of Thrace. It was on the main land, and the first on the continent of Europe imprinted with the footsteps of an apostle. It was in the near vicinity of Philippi.

12. *Philippi.* A city of Macedonia, formerly called Dathos. It was repaired and beautified by Philip of Macedon, and called Philippi in honor of him. An important church was here established, to which one of Paul's epistles was addressed. This city was distinguished as the battle-field where Cæsar and Pompey had their final struggle, and where, subsequently, Augustus and Anthony conquered Brutus and Cassius. ¶ *The chief city of that part, &c.* As Livy, the Roman historian, describes Amphipolis as the chief city of Macedonia, some have been inclined to change not only the translation, but the Greek text, so as to read *a city of the first part of Macedonia*; the kingdom having been divided by the Romans into four parts, of which this south-easterly section was the first. Robinson remarks, however, that "it is more probable that the reading of the Greek is correct, since there are no various readings; and Philippi is called the first or chief city of that part of Macedonia, perhaps from some peculiar privileges bestowed upon it, and not as being the capital of that division of the country; since this honor belonged to Amphipolis in the first division, and to Thessalonica in the second." The argument of Pearce is also worthy of consideration: although Amphipolis was the chief city in the time of Paulus Emilius, yet in the lapse of two hundred and twenty years from that time, Philippi might have become the most extensive and splendid city, in as much as such peculiar privileges were granted to it. ¶ *A colony.* The meaning is, a Roman colony, or a place occupied by Roman citizens. None of the ancient civil historians notice this fact; and, until recently, it rested on the unsup-

of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

14 ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God,

ported testimony of Luke. But by the providential discovery of ancient coins, it is clearly shown that Julius Cæsar bestowed colonial privileges on this city, and that further advantages were granted by Angustus. Thus Luke's account is fully corroborated.

13. *By a river side, where prayer was wont to be made.* The Jews were accustomed to build *proseuchæ*, or houses of prayer, near the sea or rivers, that they might have water sufficient for their abundant ablutions; especially when not allowed to erect synagogues in the cities where they dwelt. Josephus quotes a decree of the rulers of Halicarnassus, which recognizes the fact that this privilege was freely granted by the Romans to the Jews: "Since we have ever a great regard to piety towards God and to holiness, and since we aim to follow the people of Rome, who are the benefactors of all men, we have decreed that as many men and women of the Jews as are willing so to do, may celebrate their Sabbaths, and perform their holy offices, according to the Jewish laws; and may make their *proseuchæ* at the seaside, according to the custom of their forefathers," &c.—*Antiq. B.* xiv. ch. x. § 23. The text might not improperly be rendered, "where there was a *proseucha*," that is, a house of prayer. ¶ *Sat down.* The usual posture of Jewish teachers. See notes on Matt. v. 1; Luke iv. 16. ¶ *Women.* Perhaps this was before the regular hour of worship; some suppose the women worshipped at one hour, and the men at another. Perhaps, however, in the *proseuchæ*, as in the temple, a separate place was assigned for the women; and Paul chose to address them first.

14. *A seller of purple.* Purple was a color of peculiar richness and value,

heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*: And she constrained us.

16 ¶ And it came to pass as we went to prayer, a certain damsel

made from a shell-fish, and was worn by the rich and powerful. See note on Luke xvi. 19. ¶ *Thyatira.* A city of Lydia in Asia Minor, now called *Ak-hizar*: from an inscription found there, it appears that this city was anciently distinguished for perfection in the art of dyeing purple. ¶ *Which worshipped God.* She may have been a Jewess; more probably, perhaps, a proselyte. A religious, devout female. See note on Acts xiii. 16. ¶ *Whose heart the Lord opened, &c.* As God is the giver of every perfect gift, so he is here said to have prepared Lydia's heart to receive the gospel. I apprehend that miraculous agency is not implied. The meaning seems to be this: God had already enabled her to profit by her former privileges, so that her heart was in a fit condition to receive and embrace the gospel.

15. *Baptized.* Immediately after her conversion, it would seem. Such was the early practice of the church. ¶ *Her household.* Both old and young are properly included in this phrase. As the children of Jewish parents were entitled to circumcision, the seal of the ancient covenant, so the children of Christians were made partakers of baptism, as their proper inheritance. Such seems the natural inference from this and several similar cases recorded. ¶ *If ye have judged me to be faithful, &c.* If ye consider me worthy the name of Christian. ¶ *Constrained us.* Invited us with much earnestness and urgency. Thus doing, she manifested both her Christian benevolence, and her desire to be further instructed by Paul.

16. *As we went to prayer.* Literally, as we were going to the *proseucha*, or the place of prayer. See note on ver. 13. "As we were going to the oratory."—*Haweis.* ¶ *Spirit of divina-*

possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high

God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days But Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come

*tion.* "Or, as the original and margin read, 'with a spirit of Python.' This is a classical allusion to the ancient mythology. Python was a serpent or dragon, fabled to have been killed by Apollo, to whom the name also of the monster was transferred, and he was called the Pythian Apollo. Hence diviners and soothsayers were called by the same name, as the priestesses in the temple of Apollo were believed to be inspired by the god, and to utter oracles when in the state of enthusiasm and ecstasy. This popular term was adopted by the sacred writer, without, of course, endorsing the truth or error of that belief of the Gentile world. The language of the times was used, the modes of speech, the idioms, the phrases, because that was the only language which could be understood by the generality. The girl in question was probably melancholy or insane, which gave rise to the idea that she was possessed with a different spirit from her own. Her owners readily turned her disease to an account, and employed her for the purpose of gain, as a *diviner* of future events, or a *soothsayer*, or fortune-teller. It is not incredible that many were easily imposed upon in that age of ignorance and superstition, when, even at this day, there are thousands that can be duped by any impostor or fanatic who possesses cunning and address. She was, perhaps, sincere in the belief that she was really possessed by the spirit of the Pythian god; as the priestess of Apollo or Delphos was affected, probably by the mephitic gas which arose from the earth where the tripod, on which she sat, was placed. It has been the opinion of some critics, that this woman was also a *ventriloquist*, or one who could utter sounds from the breast, without any perceptible motion of the lips."—*Livermore*.

¶ *Much gain.* The people paid money to her master for the information which they supposed she gave; and in this they were no more unwise than many who now pay large sums for what does

not benefit them. ¶ *Soothsaying.* Pretending to disclose the future.

17. *These men are the servants, &c.* She had heard this said, and chose to repeat it, perhaps to gain additional credit, and perhaps merely in accordance with a trait generally manifested in the minds of the insane. See note on Matt. viii. 29. An evil spirit would not thus disparage the whole tribe of heathen deities; and the supposition that the devil thus zealously testified the truth, is not altogether consistent with his character as the father of lies; nor is it supposable that any evil spirit was divinely commissioned and compelled to bear such testimony; for Paul was so much grieved by it, that he cured the disease of the maiden, to escape further annoyance. The supposition that she was literally possessed by a living evil spirit, other than her own, is fraught with difficulties not easily surmounted.

18. *Paul, being grieved.* Disturbed, embarrassed, by her constant clamor; he also commiserated her unhappy condition, and was indignant at the heartlessness of her masters, who took advantage of her mental alienation, for their pecuniary profit. ¶ *Said to the spirit, &c.* Some have supposed he thus recognized the reality of her possession, by a direct address to the spirit. For an illustration of this matter, see note on Mark v. 1—20. It is well known that, almost uniformly, the insane are most easily managed, by apparently agreeing with their wild fancies, and speaking according to *their* opinion of the facts in the case. As Jesus did not contradict the maniac, who imagined himself possessed by a legion of devils, but bade them come out of him, so Paul did not contradict the damsel, but addressed her in the manner most likely to arrest her attention, and restore her to her right mind. Jesus rebuked the winds, and they obeyed him, Matt. viii. 26; and he rebuked a fever, and it left the sick person, Luke iv. 39. But nobody imagines

out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 ¶ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the market-place unto the rulers,

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men,

that winds or diseases are intelligent beings. So a spirit of insanity may be rebuked and removed; yet it by no means follows that it is a living, intelligent being, either good or bad. See also note on ver. 17.

19. *The hope of their gains was gone.* This was what excited their anger against the apostle. The Gadarenes were angry with our Lord, because he destroyed their hope of gain by an unholy traffic, though human suffering was thereby relieved. Matt. viii. 34. So the masters of this insane girl, through greediness of pecuniary gain, were maddened by her restoration to health and a sound mind. Strange, that not only heathens, but professed Christians, are willing to make merchandise of the miseries of their fellow-men, and are excited to anger against those who interfere with their iniquitous business. ¶ *The market-place.* Or, forum, where not only mercantile affairs were transacted, but popular meetings and courts of judicature were frequently held. ¶ *Rulers.* Probably the same who are called *magistrates* in ver. 20.

20. *Magistrates.* Generally understood to mean the Roman prætors, who exercised both civil and military power in the colonies, of which Philippi was one, ver. 12. ¶ *Jews.* Though the Jews were tolerated by the Romans, ver. 13, yet a strong prejudice existed against them. The accusers of Paul and Silas availed themselves of this prejudice, to enlist a stronger party against them, and prepossess the minds of the magistrates. ¶ *Do exceedingly trouble our city.* The specifications of this charge are mentioned in ver. 21. The ostensible motive of the accusers was a desire for the public good and a reverence for the laws. The real motive was anger at the loss of their gains. Cases, not altogether dissimilar, have been witnessed in the present age. Attempts to reform existing evils — evils

being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

fraught with direful misery to a portion of the community — are certain to excite a marvellous regard for old customs, on the part of those whose gains are diminished or endangered.

21. *Teach customs, &c.* That is, religious doctrines and ordinances. They were ashamed to avow their real grievance, namely, that Paul had restored a maniac to sanity: they accused him and his associates as heretics, or, as the Athenians expressed it, setters-forth of strange gods, Acts xvii. 18. "Though there was as yet no express law of the senate or the emperor against the Christians, yet there was an old law of the Romans, forbidding them either to worship new gods, or the gods of other nations, and requiring them to worship the gods of their country; from which Christianity dissuaded them, not suffering any of them to worship the gods of their fathers, but requiring them to turn from those dumb idols to the living God, 1 Thess. i. 9; and hence St. Paul speaks thus to those of Lystra, 'We preach to you that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God, who made heaven and earth.' Acts xiv. 15." — *Whitby.* ¶ *Being Romans.* That is, either Romans by birth, or as inhabitants of a Roman colony, entitled to privileges, and bound by the laws, as Roman citizens.

22. *The multitude rose up, &c.* A popular tumult was excited. Nothing is more effectual for this purpose, than the outcry that religion or the church is in danger. ¶ *Rent off their clothes.* That is, the clothes of Paul and Silas. Instead of quelling the disturbance, as was their duty, and giving the disciples a fair trial according to law, the magistrates yielded to the will of the mob, and commanded summary chastisement to be inflicted. It was customary to strip off the clothes of those who were beaten, both in Greece and Rome. To this, Cicero refers in his oration



23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely :

24 Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 ¶ And at midnight Paul and

against Verres :—" He commanded him to be seized, stripped naked in the midst of the forum, and bound, and rods to be brought." ¶ *Commanded to beat them.* Or, to beat them with rods. This was a customary punishment among the Romans ; and the officer, appointed to inflict it, was styled *Lictor*.

23. *Many stripes.* The Jewish law forbade the infliction of more than forty stripes ; but the Roman law had no such limitation ; and when, as in this case, the scourging was under the influence of a mob, it may well be supposed that a much larger number of stripes were inflicted. To this instance of scourging Paul has been supposed to refer, in 2 Cor. xi. 23, by " stripes above measure," that is, above the Jewish measure of forty. ¶ *Cast them into prison.* This was the act of the magistrates, ver. 36, 37. They probably designed to bring them to trial and inflict further punishment, according to the forms of law ; the previous scourging having been wholly illegal. ¶ *To keep them safely.* Securely ; so that they should not escape from custody.

24. *Inner prison.* The most secure part of the prison. See note on Acts xii. 10. ¶ *Stocks.* A machine, composed of two pieces of timber or planks, with holes sufficiently large to enclose the ankles, in which it was customary to confine the legs of prisoners. The holes were sometimes placed at an inconvenient distance, so that the prisoner was obliged to lie prostrate. If the disciples were confined in this manner, after their backs had been lacerated by the rods, their suffering must have been intense. Yet they sang praises to God, ver. 25. It is not certain, however, that such stocks are here intended. The original signifies *wcod*. Their feet may have been secured to pieces of timber, by cords or otherwise.

25. *At midnight, &c.* Either bodily

Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them.

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison

pain or some other circumstance prevented them from sleeping. Yet was not their trust in God shaken. They commended themselves to the divine care and protection, and sang praises to the God of all grace. Perhaps one ground of their rejoicing and gratitude may have been, that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Acts v. 41. ¶ *The prisoners heard them.* Unwonted sounds were these, in a heathen prison. It was natural that the other prisoners should be astonished, and should afterwards express their astonishment. Paul and Silas, bleeding and mangled as they were, yet found cause for rejoicing in the God of salvation ; they did not attempt to conceal their emotions, through fear of more severe punishment, but gave free utterance to their prayers and thanksgivings ; and the prison-house resounded with praise.

26. *Suddenly.* While they were yet praying and singing. ¶ *A great earthquake.* An earthquake, under such circumstances, might be readily recognized as an indication of the divine presence and approval. ¶ *All the doors were opened.* This may have been a natural effect of the earthquake ; though, more probably, it was miraculous, as bolts and bars and chains would not readily all yield to the same movement. ¶ *Every one's bands were loosed.* This fact must be acknowledged as a miracle, or denied altogether. No natural cause, connected with the earthquake, is sufficient to account for it. It would seem that all the other prisoners, as well as Paul and Silas, were liberated. Their minds were thus prepared to hear the communications of Paul and Silas with profit ; for it could not well be doubted that they were the servants of that Being who had answered their prayers and praises by such a tremendous display of power.

27. *Would have killed himself.* By

awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud

voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas;

the Roman law, a prison-keeper was held responsible for the prisoners committed to his custody. See note on Acts xii. 19. When, therefore, this jailer was suddenly awakened from sleep by the earthquake, perceived that the prison-doors were open, and supposed that all his prisoners had escaped, he apprehended that his own life was forfeited; and, in the agitation of the moment, he was about to commit suicide. This mode of avoiding dreaded evils was not considered sinful or even disgraceful by the Romans: on the contrary, it could plead the example of many great men in its favor; such as Brutus and Cassius, who slew themselves in this very city of Philippi, and Cato at Utica.

28. *With a loud voice.* So that the jailer might hear him. As the jailer supposed all the prisoners had fled, of course he was not in the prison; and his intention to kill himself was probably communicated to Paul by the Spirit, as he had no other means to ascertain it. ¶ *Do thyself no harm.* Do not destroy your life. This was the harm designed. The same command should be heeded by every one who indulges any passion hurtful to the mind or the body. But, in this case, it was limited to the particular harm contemplated. ¶ *We are all here.* You have not forfeited your life; no one has escaped; we are all in your hands, even as before the earthquake.

29. *Came trembling.* He trembled from the effects of his fright. He was also agitated by the "great earthquake,"—a cause of at least momentary terror to every person. He was amazed to find all his prisoners at liberty from their bonds, yet remaining quietly in prison. All these causes combined may sufficiently account for this trembling. ¶ *Fell down, &c.* He prostrated himself before those whom he had recently thrust into the inner prison. He now viewed them as favorites of the gods, and appealed to them for intercession between him and the offended deities.

30. *Brought them out.* From the inner prison, to a more comfortable apartment. ¶ *Sirs.* The original is often translated *lords*; a respectful term of address. ¶ *What must I do to be saved?* This question is very similar to the appeal of the disciples, Matt. viii. 25; and, like that, it was uttered under circumstances of apprehended peril and extreme terror. The disciples feared death by drowning; the jailer, from the avenging power of the gods, whom he supposed himself to have offended by maltreating their favorites. There is no good reason to suppose that salvation was sought from any evil beyond death, in the one case more than in the other. It should not be overlooked, that, while the apparent danger of the jailer was greater than that of the disciples, the language of the disciples manifests even more intense alarm and anxiety than his. This interpretation is not peculiar to any one denomination of Christians. For example:—"It is not credible that this man, a pagan, should have been concerned about eternal salvation. *To be saved*, therefore, will signify, as in any other language, *to consult his safety*. The keeper of the prison feared lest he should be punished by the gods, because he had harshly treated men so venerable, and so dear to the deity. He therefore inquired what he should do, that he might escape divine punishment. Whether, indeed, the jailer had obtained any hope of a better life, from ancient tradition, or from the doctrine of the philosophers, or whether he had ever before this time heard Paul preaching, is uncertain."—*Rosenmüller*. "In asking this question, 'What shall I do to be saved,' or to be safe, the jailer, who had probably never heard of a future life of happiness or misery, as preached by the apostles, referred entirely to his personal security, about which he was naturally alarmed, in consequence of the earthquake, which had shaken the house to its foundations, and opened the doors of the prison."—

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

*Kenrick.* The true state of the case seems to be this. The jailer at first supposed his prisoners had escaped; and, knowing his liability to very severe punishment by the Roman law, his first impulse was to kill himself, that being a prevalent Roman custom in like cases of extremity. The assurance of Paul that all the prisoners were yet in the prison, arrested his suicidal hand. He had now nothing to fear from the Roman government; for he had not lost a single prisoner, and he was not responsible for the forcible opening of the prison doors by an earthquake or miracle. He seems now to have become more fully conscious that there had been a great earthquake; for it must not be forgotten that his mind was necessarily agitated and bewildered, having been aroused suddenly from sleep in such an extraordinary manner. It is not within reasonable probability that he could with any considerable calmness and composure reflect on the precise character of the results likely to follow this extraordinary convulsion of the earth. But intuitively or instinctively, as it were, connecting the patient manner in which the disciples had endured personal indignities and stripes, their apparent confidence in their God, their prayers and praises to him, which may have been heard before he fell asleep, their perfect composure and cheerfulness in this moment of general terror and alarm, — connecting these and other circumstances in his mind, he naturally concluded that their God was very powerful, and that the earthquake might be an indication of his design to inflict punishment on all who had abused them. It is by no means probable that these considerations were well defined, or that he had any very distinct idea of the kind of danger which was impending. But to some danger he manifestly considered himself liable; and he earnestly sought how he might avoid it. In the extremity of terror, he fell down, exclaiming, What shall I do to secure my safety?

31. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Become Christians. It is not certain whether the jailer had previously even heard the name of Jesus, though very

probably he had. But Paul immediately proceeded to preach Jesus, as the well-beloved Son of that God who had shaken the earth and loosed the bars of the prison, and as the Saviour of men, ver. 32. ¶ *Thou shalt be saved.* You shall be safe from all harm whatever. Notwithstanding you have abused the servants of the true God, yet you need not be thus terrified. Become obedient to him, and a disciple of his Son, and nothing shall harm you: you may confide in the same Power which has protected us. ¶ *And thy house.* Thy household; thy family. The jailer, in his sudden alarm, had feared that both he and his family were exposed to some terrible calamity. The apostle desired to quiet his feelings, and soothe his terrors; and hence assured him that his family also were safe. It is observed by Doddridge, that "the meaning cannot be, that the eternal salvation of his family could be secured by his faith, but that his believing in Christ would be the best security of his family from present danger; and that, if they also themselves believed, they would be entitled to the same spiritual and everlasting blessings with himself; which Paul might the rather add, as it is probable that many of them, under this terrible alarm, might have attended the master of the family into the dungeon." That Paul may have had an allusion to that salvation from sin which is the grand characteristic of the gospel, as well as to preservation from present danger, is very possible, as it was the subject generally uppermost in his mind. But there is no more probability that the hope of such salvation, or the fear of endless misery, was embraced in the terrified jailer's question, than there is that heathen citizens are now chiefly excited by such hopes or such fears, when they rush forth from their dwellings, and seek safety in any possible manner, whenever the foundations of the earth are shaken. It is notorious that not only women and children, but men also, with all their boasted fortitude, are rendered nearly frantic by a violent earthquake, and the air is filled with shrieks and exclamations of terror. The shock is so sudden, that the

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

mind is overpowered for the moment; but instant death is the calamity chiefly feared.

32. *The word of the Lord.* The gospel. Probably, in this first discourse, Paul dwelt chiefly on the evidence that Jesus was the Son and Messenger of the true God. He could have done but little more. For the earthquake occurred at midnight, ver. 25, 26; and the jailer's fears were quieted, he washed the stripes of the disciples, was baptized with his family, and partook of food, rejoicing and believing in God, before morning, ver. 33—35. Perhaps, *the word concerning the Lord*, namely, the testimony in proof of his divine mission, would express the idea more correctly than the present translation. ¶ *All that were in his house.* There was naturally a general gathering; and Paul availed himself of the recent manifestation of divine power, to make a favorable impression on their minds. His effort was successful; and many believed, and professed their faith.

33. *Washed their stripes.* Bathed the wounds made by the rods of the executioner. A few hours previously, he had thrust them into the dungeon, unwashed and unpitied. But now his sympathy is excited, and he endeavors to alleviate their sufferings. This has been noticed by commentators as an instance of pure Christian benevolence, and a proof that conversion to Christianity humanizes the affections, and causes men to regard and treat each other as brethren. That such is the spirit and effect of Christianity is unquestionable, and its heavenly origin is thus demonstrated. But it may be doubted whether a few hours sufficed for this spirit to take root in the jailer's heart, and bear fruit so abundantly; especially as there is no evidence that his conversion, though an effect resulting from a miracle, was in itself miraculous. His conduct may be satisfactorily explained on other grounds. While he regarded the disciples as troublesome and disorderly

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go.

Jews, he treated them as enemies; but so soon as he became convinced that they were servants of the true God, by a natural revulsion of feeling he regarded them as innocent sufferers, pitied them, and hastened to afford all the relief in his power. ¶ *Was baptized, he and all his, straightway.* He professed his faith in Jesus, and the customary seal was immediately applied. As it is not probable that there was a pool of water in the prison, it would seem that baptism was administered by pouring or sprinkling; and the form of expression justifies the conclusion that children as well as adults were at this time baptized.

34. *Brought them into his house.* The preceding events appear to have occurred in the prison. ¶ *Meat.* Food of any kind, whether animal or vegetable, was formerly styled meat. See Gen. i. 29, 30; ix. 3. The disciples had probably fasted from the time when they were seized by the exasperated masters of the girl on whom the benevolent miracle was wrought, ver. 19, and needed refreshment. ¶ *And rejoiced.* He had many reasons for rejoicing; but only one is mentioned, to wit, his faith in God as a father and friend. Confidence in God uniformly begets cheerfulness and joy. Especially is this effect discoverable, when the change from darkness to light, from dismay to a firm trust, is so sudden and great as in this case.

35. *When it was day, &c.* The magistrates did not originally design to liberate the disciples so soon, ver. 23, 24. Very probably their fears were excited by the earthquake, regarded by the Romans as an omen of evil. Perhaps they apprehended that they had excited the anger of the God of the disciples, who had thus manifested his indignation, and asserted his right to be feared, though not known and acknowledged by the Roman senate or people. See note on ver. 21. ¶ *Sergeants.* Officers, styled *lictors* by the Romans.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

38 And the sergeants told these

words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

They were inferior officers, and performed, among other duties, that of executioners. Their emblem of office was the *fascies*, or a bundle of rods with an axe in the centre.

36. *Depart, and go in peace.* The jailer gladly executed this command of the magistrates, and dismissed his prisoners with a benediction.

37. *Paul said, &c.* The magistrates mistook the character of this apostle, when they supposed he would flee from the city, leaving their conduct unquestioned. The man who "fought with beasts at Ephesus," 1 Cor. xv. 32, feared not to assert his rights as a Roman citizen, even in the midst of enemies. ¶ *They have beaten us, &c.* In strong language he exposed the misconduct of the magistrates. They had publicly beaten and imprisoned Roman citizens, without even the form of law; for they had not been convicted of any crime. Paul claimed the rights and privileges of Roman citizenship; and well he might, for he "was free-born," Acts xxii. 28. ¶ *Privily, &c.* He would not consent to such mean proceedings, designed to conceal the iniquitous conduct of the magistrates; but he insisted, as was right, that they who imprisoned should also release him publicly.

38. *They feared, &c.* The magistrates were terrified, when they learned that the persons whom they had so grossly outraged were Roman citizens. It was expressly prohibited by the Valerian law, that a Roman citizen should be bound; and by the Porcian law, that he should be beaten with rods. Both these laws the magistrates had violated; unintentionally, perhaps, not knowing that Paul and Silas were Romans; yet criminally, because they should

have ascertained the fact before committing violence. They knew that provincial officers, who abused their power and violated the laws, were liable to severe punishment. Hence their fears. They seem not to have regarded the inhumanity and immorality of the transaction; but they dreaded the punishment due to their illegal proceedings.

39. *Besought them, &c.* They humbled themselves before the men whom they had abused, and besought them to forgive the past, and leave the city. Thus was the object of the disciples accomplished. They were publicly brought out of prison by the magistrates, and doubtless pronounced innocent of any transgression of the law. This public acquittal was claimed and obtained, that the cause of Christ might not suffer from allegations against its prominent defenders. It becomes every public minister of the gospel to look well to it, that he do not injure the cause he professes to advocate, by misconduct, or even the appearance of evil.

40. *Comforted them.* By relating their own experience of God's protecting care and kindness in the midst of dangers and afflictions, they encouraged their brethren to persevere in the cause which they had embraced. They administered comfort, by inspiring hope and confidence in the hearts of believers, which had recently been filled with fear and discouragement. From this beginning, unpromising at first, but triumphant in its progress, resulted the establishment of a flourishing church in Philippi, to which Paul subsequently addressed one of his Epistles. ¶ *Departed.* To visit other cities, to preach the gospel to other communities, and to

## CHAPTER XVII.

NOW when they had passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sab-

encounter other perils. They turned not back in despair, but pressed forward with zeal, not counting even their lives dear unto themselves, Acts xx. 24.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1. *Amphipolis*. This "was a city of Macedonia, situated not far from the mouth of the river Strymon, which flowed around the city, and thus occasioned its name. It was originally a colony of the Athenians, founded by Cimon. Under the Romans it became the capital of the eastern province of Macedonia. In the middle ages it received the name of Chrysopolis. The village which now stands upon the site of the ancient city is called *Empoli* or *Yamboli*, a corruption of Amphipolis."—*Robinson's Culmet*. ¶ *Apollonia*. A city in Macedonia, between Philippi and Thessalonica, formerly celebrated for trade. ¶ *Thessalonica*. A seaport, and the capital city of the second part of Macedonia. See note on Acts xvi. 12. "It is situated at the head of the Sinus Thermaicus. It was anciently called *Therma*, but afterwards received the name of Thessalonica, either from Cassander, in honor of his wife Thessalonica, the daughter of Philip, or from Philip himself, in memory of a victory obtained over the armies of Thessaly. It was inhabited by Greeks, Romans, and Jews." It is "now called *Salouiki*,—a wretched town, but having a population of about sixty thousand persons."—*Robinson's Culmet*. ¶ *A synagogue*. Rather, the synagogue. It has been remarked, that the article is here emphatic, as if this were the only synagogue in that region. Some have supposed that Paul and his companions tarried not at Amphipolis or Apollonia, because there was no synagogue in either of those cities.

2. *As his manner was*. Both Jesus and his apostles were accustomed to

bath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas:

visit the synagogues, not only to worship God, but to address the people, and communicate to them the glad tidings of the gospel. Luke iv. 16; Acts ix. 20; xiii. 5, 14; xiv. 1; xviii. 4, &c. ¶ *Reasoned with them*. Or, discoursed to them, or addressed them. The word *dielegeto* (διελέγετο), here used, is translated *preached*, and *preaching*, Acts xx. 7, 9; and in Acts xviii. 4. xxiv. 25, manifestly has the same meaning. It sometimes indicates a discussion or controversy between two parties; but here denotes only that Paul addressed the people. ¶ *Out of the scriptures*. He drew his arguments from the scriptures, namely, the Old Testament; or he explained those scriptures, showing how exactly the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah had been fulfilled in the person of Jesus.

3. *Opening*. Unfolding or explaining. See note on Luke xxiv. 32. ¶ *Alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, &c.* The crucifixion of Jesus was a stumbling-block to the Jews, in consequence of their opinion that the Messiah would live and reign for ever on the earth. The apostle urged that the prophecies concerning him clearly implied his death by violence, and his resurrection from the dead; and that they could not be fulfilled in any person who did not thus die and rise again. In this sense it was necessary, it *must needs* be, that the Messiah should exhibit these characteristic marks, before he could be confidently received by any who exercised faith in the prophecies. See notes on Luke xxiv. 25—27. ¶ *Is Christ*. Rather, is the Christ; or the Messiah. See note on Matt. i. 1. He showed that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth were in perfect accordance with the ancient predictions, and that therefore he was to be embraced as the true Messiah.

4. *Some of them*. Namely, of the Jews. ¶ *Consorted with Paul and*

and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

*Silas.* Associated with them, or adhered to them. Literally, had their lot with them. The meaning is, they became fellow-disciples of the Lord Jesus. ¶ *Devout Greeks.* Those who feared God; proselytes to Judaism, and worshippers in the synagogue. See note on Acts xiii. 16. ¶ *Chief women.* See note on Acts xiii. 50.

5. *Moved with envy.* Probably at the success of Paul in obtaining disciples. Nothing more quickly or violently excites the envy and anger of partisans than the conversion of their own members to an opposite faith. Witness the Jews in our Saviour's day, and multitudes in every age, from that time to the present. ¶ *Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort.* Tyndale expresses the meaning more accurately thus: "evil men which were vagabonds." The remarks of Barnes deserve consideration:—"The word *lewd* is not in the original. The Greek is, 'and having taken certain wicked men of those who were about the forum,' or market-place. The forum, or market-place, was the place where the idle assembled, and where those were gathered together that wished to be employed. Matt. xx. 3. Many of these would be of abandoned character, the idle, the dissipated, and the worthless; and therefore just the materials for a mob. It does not appear that they felt any particular interest in the subject; but they were, like other mobs, easily excited, and urged on to any acts of violence. The pretence on which the mob was excited was, that they had everywhere produced disturbance, and that they violated the laws of the Roman emperor, ver. 6, 7. It may be observed, however, that a mob usually regard very little the cause in which they are engaged. They may be roused either for or against religion, and be-

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also;

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying, that there is another king, *one Jesus*.

8 And they troubled the people,

come as full of zeal for the insulted honor of religion as *against* it." ¶ *Jason.* He seems to have been a kinsman of Paul, Rom. xvi. 21, who, perhaps for that reason, lodged at his house. ¶ *Sought to bring them out, &c.* For the purpose of offering personal violence.

6. *Turned the world upside down.* Produced confusion and disturbance. It is true that, in almost every place where the gospel was preached, confusion followed; but it was excited by the opposers of the gospel, not by its advocates. See note on Matt. x. 34. In one sense, they truly turned the world upside down: they proclaimed a gospel which was destined to overturn and abolish every form of vice in practice; but this was not the sense in which their accusers used the phrase.

7. *Whom Jason hath received.* That is, entertained as inmates of his house. ¶ *Decrees of Cesar.* "Neither the Roman people nor their emperors allowed any to be called king, without special permission, in the conquered provinces." —*Grotius.* ¶ *Another king, one Jesus.* The charge was, that Paul and Silas were guilty of sedition or treason, in setting up another king in opposition to Caesar. The same charge was alleged against Jesus Luke xxiii. 2; John xix. 12. The Jews perfectly well understood that the charge was frivolous; but they were willing to resort to any means, however unfair, to accomplish their object. They could not be ignorant that the only sense in which Paul declared Jesus to be a king was spiritual, especially as he taught that Jesus had once died, and had risen and ascended to heaven, no more to dwell in the flesh on earth.

8. *Troubled the people, &c.* The Romans were naturally alarmed at the charge that rebellion against the civil

and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason and of the other, they let them go.

10 ¶ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

authority was contemplated. They feared that tumults might be excited, and some overt act be committed, which should expose their city to the vengeance of Rome; and that vengeance, they knew, was terrible against all who resisted her power. They were moved by fear, rather than anger; but the Jews who thus troubled them were both angry and malicious.

9. *Taken security of Jason, &c.* This is a legal term, equivalent to what is now expressed by taking bonds or bail. Many commentators understand that Jason and the brethren, who were arrested, gave bonds, according to the Roman forms of law, for the good conduct of Paul and Silas, or for their departure from the city. It is more probable, however, that they gave security for themselves only. They had been accused of abetting a rebellious movement. All which could be required of them was, that they should give sufficient security for their own quiet and orderly behaviour, and their peaceable conformity to the laws. And this is all which the text fairly implies.

10. *Sent away Paul and Silas, &c.* This was done as an act of friendship, to secure them from personal harm. Their visit to Thessalonica, though thus abruptly and violently terminated, was not in vain. They had enjoyed the opportunity of preaching the gospel publicly on three Sabbath-days, ver. 2, besides teaching privately on other occasions. The word had taken root, and many believed, both of Jews and Gentiles, ver. 4. A flourishing church was established, to whom Paul subsequently addressed two epistles. ¶ *Berea.* "A city of Macedonia, near Mount Cithanes. There is a medal of Berea extant, which is remarkable for being inscribed 'of the second Macedonia,' and also for being the only Macedonian medal of the date (A.U.C. 706),

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few.

inscribed with the name of the city where it was struck."—*Calmet.*

11. *These were more noble, &c.* The word here used literally means more noble by blood, better born, or descended from more illustrious ancestors. But in this place it indicates a noble quality of mind or disposition. The Bereans were not so bigoted or narrow-minded as those at Thessalonica. This is sufficiently explained by what follows. ¶ *Received the word, &c.* In this was manifested their nobleness of mind, their ingenuousness of disposition: they did not reject the gospel unheard, or oppose it by exciting a popular tumult; but they listened patiently and attentively, and diligently compared what they heard with the testimony of the scriptures, to see whether the things spoken were consistent with the divine oracles. This is the only prudent and proper method to pursue, if one would attain a knowledge of the truth. It is unsafe to rely wholly on others; personal examination of the scriptures is demanded of every man; and happy is he who obeys. In preaching Jesus as the Messiah, the apostles uniformly appealed to the Old Testament, when addressing Jews or proselytes. In preaching the gospel, both the Old and the New Testament should be made the ultimate source of proof. If any man speak not according to these, let him not be trusted; lest, while the blind lead the blind, both stumble and fall.

12. *Therefore many of them believed.* This was the natural result of their faithful investigation. While the gospel reveals truths which are beyond the grasp of unassisted reason nevertheless those truths are reasonable, and commend themselves to the most enlightened and cultivated reason. They will endure the test of the most close and rigid examination. Truth never



13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul, to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

dreads the light; it is error which seeks to shield itself under the mantle of authority or obscurity. The noble Bereans examined the new doctrine with candor; they compared it with the "oracles of God," not in a cursory manner, but carefully, and from day to day and every day, ver. 11. They were rationally convinced, therefore, and were prepared thenceforth to give an answer to every one who demanded a reason of their hope. 1 Pet. iii. 15. Such converts would not readily be turned away from the faith, but would be steadfast and immovable. ¶ *Honorable women*, &c. See note on Acts xiii. 50. Not only Jews, but a multitude of Gentile proselytes, were converted to the true faith.

13. *Stirred up the people.* Agitated them; excited a commotion or tumult. The Jews of Thessalonica were not content with having driven away Paul and his companions from their city; but they pursued them to other cities. This was the customary conduct of the unbelieving Jews; and scarcely an instance of persecution against the apostles can be found, which had not its origin in them.

14. *The brethren sent away Paul.* As the principal opposition was directed against him, and his life was chiefly in peril, the brethren provided for his safety, by conveying him from their city. Silas and Timothy were suffered to remain; and their labors were desired and improved by the sober inquirers at Berea. ¶ *To go as it were to the sea.* "Rather, 'even to the sea,' for that is its signification. It does not imply that there was any feint or sleight in the case, as if they intended to deceive their pursuers."—*Barnes*.

15. *Athens.* "The capital of Attica, one of the districts of Greece, about two hundred and fifty miles south-easterly from Berea. It was, originally, an Egyptian colony, under Cecrops, and

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

16 ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

received its name from Athena, the Greek name of the goddess Minerva, its tutelary divinity, the ruins of whose beautiful temple, the Parthenon, are still extant. This city was called 'the eye of Greece, the inventor of letters, the light of the civilized world,' so brilliant was its career in arts, arms, literature, and government. Its poets, orators, warriors, philosophers, and statesmen, have been the praise and wonder of ages. The city of Socrates, and Plato, and Aristotle, and Demosthenes, never can be forgotten. The ruins of its temples, and other works of art, still astonish the traveller by their beauty and magnificence."—*Livermore*. Like other ancient eastern cities, it has long been depressed; but its prospects have recently become more promising, by efforts for the establishment of Christianity, and the elevation of the people to a higher rank in civilization. It is now the capital of the kingdom of Greece.

16. *While Paul waited*, &c. A considerable period of time was required for the return of the brethren from Athens to Berea, and the arrival of Silas and Timothy, in obedience to Paul's request, ver. 15. Indeed, they did not arrive until he had ended his labors in Athens, and had departed to Corinth, where they again joined him. See Acts xviii. 1, 5. His battle against idolatry and wickedness in that city was fought single-handed and alone. ¶ *His spirit was stirred.* He was excited by pity and grief, when he witnessed the spiritual poverty of the people, who revelled in all the luxuries of earth; and their utter forgetfulness of the true God, while they worshipped almost every thing else which could be even imagined. ¶ *Wholly given to idolatry.* Or full of idols. "Pausanias says of Athens, that there was no place where so many idols, or images, were to be seen; and Petronius, who

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

was Paul's contemporary, makes Quarta say of Athens, Our place is so full of divinities, that you can more easily find a god here than a man."—*Pearce*. So besotted were they in worshipping images, that, lest they should have omitted any of the gods, they erected an altar to the *Unknown*, ver. 23.

17. *Disputed*. Or, reasoned, or addressed. See note on ver. 2, where the same Greek word occurs. It is observable, that Paul did not reason with the Athenians from the Jewish scriptures, to which he constantly appealed when addressing Jews; and the reason is manifest: they had no faith in these oracles. He reasoned with them upon the principles of natural religion, as admitted and expounded by their own philosophers. See ver. 18—31. But, in addressing the Jews and proselytes in the synagogue at Athens, he doubtless appealed to the scriptures, as usual, though his arguments are not reported by the historian ¶ *Devout persons*. Proselytes. See note on Acts xiii. 16. ¶ *Daily*. It was his constant labor to proclaim the gospel; and he embraced every opportunity for that purpose, whether in the synagogue, the market-place, or the way-side.

18. *Epicureans*. A sect of philosophers, deriving their name from Epicurus, who advocated their peculiar doctrines about the year 300 B.C. They denied the creation of the world by God, and the immortality of the soul; and taught that pleasure was the chief good to be sought in life, and that virtue was valuable only because it produced pleasure. The founder of this sect is said to have been a pure and exemplary man; but his followers slighted his example, corrupted his doctrine, and became notorious for dissipation and licentiousness; until the term Epicurean at length became nearly equivalent to voluptuary. ¶ *Stoics*. A sect of philosophers, deriving their name from *Stoa*, the Greek name for a porch or portico, where Zeno, the founder of the sect, usually taught his disciples. Zeno was a native of Cyprus, but resided during most of his

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter

long life at Athens, and died at the age of ninety-six years, B.C. 264. The Stoics admitted a Creator of the universe; but held that he, as well as all others, was under the control of fate. They held that the perfection of virtue consisted in overpowering and controlling the passions, in despising pain, and in submitting to the decrees of fate without complaint. In their opinions concerning a future life, there was the same indistinctness and fluctuation which always accompany a belief not founded on the divine testimony. The prevailing idea was, that, at death, the soul would be absorbed into the divine essence, of which it was an emanation, and would become immortal. Practically, so far as individual existence is concerned, the Stoics, as well as the Epicureans, believed in annihilation; or, in other words, that the soul would cease to be conscious of separate, individual existence. ¶ *Babbler*. Or, trifler. The word originally signified a *picker-up of seeds*, and was applied to the poor who gleaned the fields after harvest, and the birds which devoured the seeds scattered on the ground. It was applied, metaphorically, to those who picked up the opinions of others, and made a show of their borrowed knowledge. The philosophers scorned to be instructed by a foreigner, and expressed their contempt for Paul by this epithet, which Doddridge, with a view to both its literal and metaphorical meaning, translates "retailer of scraps." ¶ *Setter forth*. Announcer; preacher. ¶ *Strange gods*. Foreign gods; gods not known or worshipped at Athens. ¶ *Jesus, and the resurrection*. That Jesus was the Messiah, that he was raised from the dead, and that all men should in like manner be raised to immortal life, were topics which Paul uniformly urged with earnestness. The Athenians seem to have understood him to propose two new divinities as objects of worship; namely, *Jesus*, a deified man, and the *resurrection*, the Greek word for which, being in the feminine gender, was taken as the name of a new goddess, whose altar they sup-

forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

20 For thou bringest certain

posed he desired to erect by the side of those which were consecrated to Fame, Shame, Plenty, Famine, Modesty, Desire, and others of like character.

19. *Areopagus*. Called Mars-hill, ver. 22. "The place, or court, in which the Areopagites, the celebrated and supreme judges of Athens, assembled. It was on an eminence, formerly almost in the middle of the city. This tribunal originally consisted of only nine persons, who had all discharged the office of archon; had acquitted themselves with honor in that trust; and after a rigorous examination before the Logistæ, had given a satisfactory account of their administration. The Areopagites were judges for life; they never sat in judgment but in the open air, and that only in the night time, that their minds might be less liable to distraction from surrounding objects, and less susceptible of either pity or aversion from extraneous motives. At first they took cognizance in criminal causes only, but in process of time their jurisdiction became of great extent."—*Ency. Rel. Knowledge*. They seem to have exercised ecclesiastical as well as civil jurisdiction, and to have had the general superintendence of the number of gods to be worshipped, and the manner in which religious services should be performed. Some suppose that Paul was taken before this tribunal for examination; others, that he was led to the place where their sessions were held, as a more convenient place for a public address, explanatory of the new doctrine taught by him. At least, one of the judges was present at that time, and was converted, ver. 34. But the silence of the historian respecting the judicial forms, or concerning any judgment of condemnation, or censure, or acquittal, indicates that no formal trial was had. ¶ *May we know*, &c. Their curiosity was excited. They desired, not so much to hear of any new form of worship, as to become

strange things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst

acquainted with this unexpected novelty, ver. 21. The inquiry was prompted solely by curiosity, but expressed with characteristic politeness; and the same politeness yielded to the apostle a patient hearing during his subsequent discourse.

20. *Strange things*. Literally, *foreign things*; meaning here, something unusual, not before heard of. ¶ *What these things mean*. What is the real foundation and object of the doctrines taught. Perhaps there may be an allusion to the fact that, in the doctrines of heathen mythology, much of the language is metaphorical; one thing being said, and another intended. The Athenians may have supposed that Paul's doctrine was also a fable, and desired to know what was its hidden meaning, — who and what were meant by Jesus and the resurrection.

21. *In nothing else*, &c. The general character of the citizens, and the crowd of strangers who were attracted to the city by the fame of its schools and works of art, is here described. The descriptions given by Thucydides, Ælian, Demosthenes, and other writers of antiquity, corroborate the declaration of Luke, that curiosity and greediness of news were characteristic of the Athenians. This is mentioned by Luke, as accounting for the circumstance narrated in ver. 19, 20.

22. *In the midst of Mars-hill*. In ver. 19, translated *Areopagus*. This diversity of reading is occasioned by translating, or rather explaining, the Greek word in this verse, and retaining it, in an English dress, in ver. 19. There was a fable, that Mars, whose Greek name was *Ares*, having slain a son of Neptune, was tried for that crime before a court of the gods assembled on this hill. The hill therefore was called Areopagus, a name compounded of *Arēs* (Ἄρης), and *pagos* (πάγος), a *mountain*, or *hill*. The meaning of the name, therefore, is

of Mars hill, and said, *Ye men of Athens*, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

Mars-hill. In this spot, sacred to the Athenians as the seat of their most august tribunal, Paul stood forth, as the first herald of a crucified yet highly exalted Prince and Saviour. Though surrounded by those whose fame for learning and wisdom filled the earth, he quailed not before their searching or sneering glances. For the wisdom of this world, though he had been carefully educated, he entertained a less exalted opinion, than for spiritual truth. He preached Jesus and him crucified; and although he knew that to the Jews this was a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, he also knew that it was the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. He delivered his message, therefore, modestly yet confidently, fearless of contradiction, and trusting in God to make it effectual. ¶ *Ye men of Athens*. A respectful and classical form of address. ¶ *Too superstitious*. This is allowed, on all hands, to be an unfortunate translation. The meaning is simply that the Athenians were very much devoted to the worship of the gods,—what we should call idolatry,—but what they considered to be a religious service. Paul understood human nature too well to commence his discourse with an offensive epithet. He did not pronounce their form of worship to be good or evil, in so many words; but proceeded gradually to disclose to them the true object of reverence and worship.

23. *Your devotions*. Rather, your places and objects of worship. ¶ *To the unknown God*. As a proof that they were excessively addicted to the worship of the gods, the apostle mentions the fact, that, besides erecting altars to all the divinities known or acknowledged among men, they had dedicated yet another to the *unknown God*. That such an altar was standing in Athens, in very ancient times, is asserted by various historians. Diogenes

24 God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood

Laërtius, for example, says that in a time of pestilence, when help was not obtained from other gods, sacrifices were offered the unknown god, who was supposed to have sent the scourge, and altars erected without name. For such an altar, "to the unknown God" would be a natural inscription. ¶ *Whom therefore, &c.* "There is remarkable address and tact in Paul's seizing on this circumstance; and yet it was perfectly fair and honest. God only could deliver in the time of the pestilence. This altar had, therefore, been really reared to him, though his name was unknown. The same Being who had interposed at that time, and whose interposition was recorded by the building of this altar, was He who had made the heavens, who ruled over all, and whom Paul was now about to make known to them."—*Barnes*.

24. *God that made the world, &c.* By asserting that God is the Creator of the world and all things therein, the apostle contradicted at once the prevalent opinion that many gods were concerned in the creation, and the doctrine of certain philosophers that the world was eternal. ¶ *Seeing that, &c.* Because he is Lord of all, filling both heaven and earth. ¶ *Dwelleth not, &c.* See note on Acts vii. 48.

25. *As though he needed any thing*. Whatever the priests might have thought, many of the ignorant worshippers had been made to believe that their sacrifices and offerings were needful to the gods. The apostle exposed the folly of this opinion, by proclaiming God as the Lord and Proprietor of all, needing no assistance from his subjects; and by announcing him as the Giver of all which men enjoy, demanding only their gratitude and obedience in return.

26. *Hath made of one blood all nations of men, &c.* God is here proclaimed as the universal Father; and men are taught to believe they have a parental

all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

Protector, instead of crediting the doctrine of the philosophers that they are urged on to their destiny by a blind fate. In this declaration is also included the truth, that, however diverse may be the color, degree of intelligence, or advantages of whatever kind, the whole human family has one common Father, who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. "The common origin of the human race furnishes a host of arguments against slavery, oppression, pride, and selfishness; and bids every mortal man remember, with vivid feeling, that he *is* his 'brother's keeper,' wherever his influence can extend."—*Livermore*. Equally strong and numerous, to say the least, are the arguments furnished by the same fact, that every mortal man has a heavenly "keeper," who never slumbers, and whose "influence" is not circumscribed by space or time. If men are bound to treat each other as *brethren*, how much more may they expect to be treated as *children* by their heavenly Father! See Matt. vii. 9—11. ¶ *And hath determined*, &c. All events are under his control. He appoints the times of prosperity and downfall, and extent of jurisdiction, to all nations, as well as the more minute vicissitudes through which individuals pass. He numbers the hairs of the head, and permits no event to occur which may not be made subservient to the accomplishment of his general purpose of grace.

27. *That they should seek the Lord*. It is the duty of men to recognize God in his works; and they are here placed in the midst of so many evidences of his existence, and manifestations of his grace, that they may learn something of his true character, even from the things which are made. Rom. i. 19—21. ¶ *Feel after him*, &c. Though, by the light of nature, it is possible to acquire some knowledge of the divine character, yet the investigation is labo-

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

rious, and attended with many doubts and uncertainties, which are here very happily indicated. It is only by the more radiant light of revelation, that men are able to discern clearly the path which conducts to true religious knowledge. ¶ *Though he be not far*, &c. By his constant influence and providences, God is perpetually in communion with his children: it is only the obtuseness of their own perceptions which prevents them from recognizing his presence and constant kindness. The apostle thus condemns both the Stoic philosophy concerning fate, and the Epicurean fancy (unhappily not yet entirely banished from the world), that God does not interfere in human affairs, but, having put the machinery of the world in motion, takes no further interest in the matter, nor cares whether his children preserve or ruin themselves.

28. *For in him we live*, &c. The idea expressed in ver. 25 is repeated, in proof of the nearness of God, ver. 27, by whose sustaining power we are constantly upheld, and to whose all-pervading energy we are indebted for every moment of existence. ¶ *Your own poets*, &c. That is, Grecian poets, with whose writings Paul had, in some way, become acquainted. ¶ *For we are also his offspring*. Precisely this expression occurs in Aratus; and in Cleanthus and other writers, the same sentiment is found.

29. *We ought not*, &c. The argument of this verse is well paraphrased by Doddridge: "We, therefore, with all the noble powers and faculties of the rational nature, being only the offspring of God, and bearing but a feeble ray of those consummate and original glories which shine forth in him, ought not surely to imagine the Deity to be like any thing inferior even to ourselves, any thing so mean and vile as gold, or silver, or stone (of which last material, base as it is, most of the idols are

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by *that* man whom he hath ordained: *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all

*men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 ¶ And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, *some* mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit, certain men clave

made), how curiously soever wrought by the art and contrivance of man." As a necessary consequence, the worship of such idols was absurd, and unworthy of rational men.

30. *The times of this ignorance.* That is, the ages wherein men had been ignorant of the true God, and had worshipped idols. ¶ *God winked at.* Or, overlooked. That is, he did not interfere, in any conspicuous manner, to reform or rebuke their idolatrous practices. It is a lesson, which should fill us with humility, that human reason, however highly cultivated, so long failed to attain correct conceptions of the divine character; and to impress this lesson upon the race, may reasonably be supposed to have been one purpose for which such ignorance was permitted to endure so long. ¶ *But now commandeth, &c.* God has now opened a new dispensation, by the ministry of his Son. He has clearly revealed himself and his character. He is no longer the *unknown God*; but has become manifest as the Father of the spirits of all flesh. And, having thus made himself known, he requires men to repent and turn from sinful deeds and false and unmeaning forms of worship, and to offer him the homage of their hearts.

31. *Appointed a day.* Rather, a time, or a period. We are not to understand a single day of twenty-four hours; but the reign of Christ, familiarly termed the gospel day. ¶ *Judge the world.* Or, rule the world. See 1 Sam. viii. 5, 6; Matt. xix. 28; Acts xxiv. 10. ¶ *In righteousness.* Righteously; by rules of moral equity and justice. ¶ *By that man, &c.* A circumlocution for Jesus Christ; to whom the kingdom is committed for a special purpose, and power granted for its full accomplishment. See John xvii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 24—28; Heb. ii. 7—10. ¶ *Given assurance, &c.* By raising his Son from the dead, God affixed his seal to

his Messiahship, and gave the most convincing testimony that he was duly commissioned and empowered to execute his will.

32. *Some mocked.* Probably the Epicureans, who denied the resurrection, and, like the Sadducees, regarded death as a final extinction of being. ¶ *Others said, &c.* Probably the Stoics, who, in some form, admitted a future state of existence. The argument of the apostle was interrupted by this disturbance and mocking; and it does not appear that he resumed it, though some of his audience intimated a willingness to hear him again. It would seem that, with all their devotion to idol-worship, there was so little real seriousness among the Athenians, that Paul believed his labors would be more serviceable elsewhere.

33. *Paul departed, &c.* He left the Areopagus; and, indeed, the city itself. It does not appear that he again addressed the Athenians. The field was too barren; the people were too self-conceited, to profit by his instructions. Yet his labor was not altogether in vain; for a few individuals were converted, ver. 34. "In his sensible sermon to the Areopagites, where he talked of the resurrection of the dead, some of them could not forbear sneering. All he obtained from the most reasonable of them was, that they were willing to hear him again concerning this matter: which was not sufficient inducement to him to tarry there; and so he left them. It was in luxurious Corinth, rather than in dry, philosophical, and systematical Athens, that God had much people, Acts xviii. 10."—*Markland.*

34. *Clave unto him.* Adhered to him. This is one of the very few English words having two opposite significations;—to cleave, or adhere to; and to cleave, or divide asunder. ¶ *Howbeit.* Nevertheless. Notwithstanding

unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**A**FTER these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come

the general levity of the people, a few believed. ¶ *Dionysius the Areopagite.* A member of the high court, and an important convert; yet we have no further account of this person, whether or not his light so burned as to illuminate others. ¶ *Damaris.* This may have been a female of rank and influence; or her name may be given for some reason not apparent to us. The story that she was the wife of Dionysius, as well as that he was afterwards bishop of Athens, is generally discredited, as destitute of foundation.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1. *Corinth.* Leaving Athens, where the people were indisposed to profit by his instructions, Paul next visited Corinth, the capital of Achaia. This city, one of the most populous and wealthy in Greece, was situated on the isthmus which divides the Peloponnesus from Attica. On one side, it had a port called Cenchrea, and on the other, Lechæum, by which it communicated with the sea on either side. Not only was Corinth famous for its riches and magnificence, but it was equally infamous for its sensuality and debauchery. Licentiousness was not only allowed, but consecrated by religious rites, instituted in honor of the shameless goddess Venus. But, notwithstanding the general corruption which prevailed in this community, the apostle succeeded in establishing a church, to which he afterwards addressed two Epistles.

2. *A certain Jew named Aquila.* This Jew was subsequently converted to Christianity, and his wife also. Rom. xvi. 3, 4. ¶ *Pontus.* See note on Acts ii. 9. ¶ *Italy.* One of the southern countries of Europe, and

from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought, (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.)

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timo-

the seat of that renowned city, once styled the "Mistress of the world." ¶ *Claudius.* The Roman emperor, who reigned from A.D. 41 to A.D. 54, when he was destroyed by poison. ¶ *Commanded all Jews to depart from Rome.* Banished them. Suetonius, a Roman historian, mentions the fact that the Jews were thus banished, and, as he says, on account of tumults and contentions among themselves. This decree of banishment is not mentioned by Josephus, and seems not to have been of long continuance; for Aquila soon returned to Rome, Rom. xvi. 3; and Paul found many of his countrymen there, not long afterwards. Acts xxviii. 17.

3. *Same craft.* Trade or occupation. ¶ *And wrought.* The apostles did not use their miraculous powers to procure sustenance, but labored with their own hands, as in this case, when not provided for by other means. See Acts xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 2 Thess. iii. 8. According to the custom of the Jews, the parents of Paul caused him to learn a useful trade, though they designed to educate him for a lawyer. The foolish idea, that physical labor is incompatible with mental culture, or disgraceful to a man of letters, was not included among the follies of the Jews.

4. *And reasoned.* See note on Acts xvii. 2.

5. *When Silas and Timotheus were come.* Namely, from Berea, agreeably to the message sent by Paul. Acts xvii. 15. ¶ *Pressed in the spirit.* Constrained, overborne by an unusual impulse. ¶ *That Jesus was Christ.* Rather, was the Christ, or the Messiah. This was the great point in dispute between him and the Jews. Animated by the presence of his fellow-laborers,

theus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews, *that Jesus was Christ.*

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his raiment*, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads: I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7 ¶ And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that wor-

Paul urged this truth upon his unbelieving brethren with new zeal.

6. *Opposed themselves.* That is, to the doctrine taught by Paul. ¶ *And blasphemed.* See note on Acts xiii. 45. They not only refused to believe, but mocked and reviled; inasmuch that it was manifest they were unworthy of the proffered blessing. ¶ *Shook his raiment.* As if to shake off the dust of his garment, in testimony against them. This symbolical act, expressive of disapprobation against iniquity, was common among the Jews. ¶ *Your blood be, &c.* Your guilt belongs to yourselves exclusively. I have performed my duty. When the impending destruction falls on you, remember that you have rejected my message, and that you perish by your own folly. This is not an imprecation, but a solemn warning. ¶ *I will go unto the Gentiles.* According to the direction of our Lord, Matt. vii. 6, Paul did not persist in the attempt to preach the gospel to the unwilling ears of his countrymen, but addressed himself immediately to the Gentiles, who were more ready to hear and believe the gracious message.

7. *Departed thence.* That is, from the synagogue, where he had addressed the Jews. ¶ *A certain man's house, &c.* Probably Justus had become a believer, and readily opened his house as a place of meeting. It does not distinctly appear whether Paul changed his place of lodging, or only the place of meeting; most probably, however, the latter only; for he uniformly speaks of Aquila as a true and constant friend. ¶ *Hard to.* Near by. He selected a place near the synagogue, so that, if any Jews would, they might easily listen to him.

shipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee:

8. *Crispus.* He was one of the very few converts whom Paul personally baptized. 1 Cor. i. 14. Possibly the apostle departed from his usual custom, in consequence of the official standing of Crispus, who was the "chief ruler of the synagogue." The conversion of such a man was of great service to the cause of Christianity, but excessively annoying and exasperating to the Jews. ¶ *All his house.* His household, or family. ¶ *Many of the Corinthians, &c.* Corrupt and debauched as they were, they more readily heard and believed the gospel than the Jews. This is not surprising, however; as it is a well-ascertained fact, that the self-conceited, self-complacent, and self-righteous, like the Jews, are the most unpromising class in the community; even more difficult of conversion than the thoughtless and dissolute multitude.

9. *By a vision.* See note on Matt. xvii. 9. Whether Paul were sleeping or waking, the impression was so vivid on his mind that he doubted not. ¶ *Be not afraid.* That is, of personal harm. The opposition he had encountered was so violent that he needed encouragement. ¶ *Hold not thy peace.* Be not silent, but proclaim the gospel freely and boldly.

10. *I am with thee.* See note on Matt. xxviii. 20. ¶ *Set on thee.* Assault thee. It may be that a conspiracy was suspected or feared. Manifestly, the Jews were highly incensed. But Paul was assured that he should be protected against bodily harm. ¶ *Much people.* Many persons. God had determined here to plant a church; and, to encourage his servant, he disclosed his purpose. Without this assurance,



for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat,

Paul might have felt constrained to depart from the city, through fear of scourging or stoning, which he had suffered at the hands of people no more highly excited than these. Acts xiv. 19; xvi. 23. And he might have considered the Corinthians too deeply sunk in iniquity to be reclaimed. But he was admonished that God had a gracious design to be accomplished, and he cheerfully and confidently yielded himself as an instrument for its accomplishment.

11. *Continued there a year and six months.* The apostles were not accustomed to remain so long in one place; but they travelled from city to city, so that the larger number might enjoy their labors. In this case, however, there was a necessity for long-continued care and watchfulness, in order to establish a church composed of persons formerly ignorant of the Christian doctrine, and utterly unaccustomed to the Christian virtues. They needed much instruction, much caution, much advice, that they might be built up into an orderly, intelligent, and devout company of disciples.

12. *Gallio.* "The brother of Seneca the philosopher. He was at first named Marcus Annæus Novatus; but, being adopted by Lucius Junius Gallio, he took the name of his adoptive father. The emperor Claudius made him proconsul of Achaia. He was of a mild and agreeable temper. To him his brother Seneca dedicated his books "Of Anger." He shared in the fortunes of his brothers, as well when out of favor as in their prosperity at court. At length, Nero put him, as well as them, to death."—*Ency. Rel. Knowl.* ¶ *Deputy.* See note on Acts xiii. 7. ¶ *Achaia.* This term properly comprehends the whole of Greece. But the Romans had divided that country into two provinces, of which the north-

13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

15 But if it be a question of

erly province was styled Macedonia; and the southerly, Achaia: the latter embraced the portion of the territory lying south of Thessalonica. ¶ *The Jews made insurrection, &c.* Excited a tumult, or popular commotion, for the purpose of personal violence against Paul. ¶ *Brought him to the judgment-seat.* To the tribunal of Gallio, who, being a newly-appointed officer and a mild-tempered man, might be expected to yield to the excited multitude, and grant their request, however unreasonable.

13. *Contrary to the law.* Some say, contrary to the Mosaic law. But, quite as probably, the Roman law may be intended, which forbade the introduction of new divinities without the special permission of the government. See note on Acts xvi. 21.

14. *About to open his mouth.* In defence or justification of himself against the false charges of the Jews. ¶ *Matter of wrong.* Crime, injustice, violation of law. ¶ *Wicked lewdness.* Gross offence. The original is more general than the translation, in its meaning. ¶ *Reason would, &c.* It would be reasonable that I should listen to your charges and investigate them. Haweis translates more literally, "with reason I should hear you patiently."

15. *Words.* Gallio seems to have entertained the common Gentile prejudice against Judaism, and to have regarded all Jewish controversies concerning religion as no more than a strife about words. ¶ *Names.* Perhaps with special reference to the question in dispute between Paul and his adversaries, whether or not Jesus was properly entitled to the name of Christ or Messiah. ¶ *Your law.* That is, the Mosaic law. ¶ *Look ye to it.* Settle all such disputes among yourselves, or avoid them. ¶ *I will be no judge, &c.* I am placed here for other purposes.

words and names, and of your law, look ye to it: for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And he drave them from the judgment-seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

It is my business to see that the laws of the empire are duly executed, not to meddle with disputes between different sects in religion.

16. *He drave them, &c.* He commanded them to depart; dismissed them without ceremony.

17. *All the Greeks.* The native inhabitants of the city; perhaps those especially who had heard Paul, and were favorably disposed towards him.

¶ *Sosthenes, the chief ruler, &c.* This person seems to have succeeded to the office of Crispus, which became vacant upon his conversion. See ver. 8. He seems afterwards to have become a convert to Christianity, notwithstanding his acts and sufferings in this popular commotion. 1 Corinthians i. 1. From his official standing, and perhaps from his open connection with the tumult excited against Paul, the Greeks regarded Sosthenes as the prime mover of the excitement, and vented their indignation on him accordingly. ¶ *Beat him.* The word here used is not that which indicates beating with rods. Very probably, no more is intended than that the multitude rushed on him, and assailed him with blows.

¶ *And Gallio cared for none of these things.* "This has been usually charged on Gallio as a matter of reproach, as if he were wholly indifferent to religion. But the charge is unjustly made; and his name is often most improperly used to represent the indifferent, the worldly, the careless, and the skeptical. But, by the testimony of ancient writers, he was a most mild and amiable man, and an upright and just judge."—*Barnes*. The most which can be said against him is, that he did not choose to neglect his official duties, and extra-judicially determine religious disputes. And, as to the outrage upon the person of Sosthenes, as Doddridge remarks, "perceiving no great mischief

18 ¶ And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla, and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

was like to follow, he was willing, by his connivance, to leave so troublesome a plaintiff as Sosthenes to feel some of the consequences of that confusion which his own bigotry and ill nature had occasioned."

18. *Tarried there yet a good while.* The most natural construction is, that he remained in Corinth a good while, in addition to the "year and six months" mentioned in ver. 11. ¶ *Sailed thence into Syria.* His design was to keep the approaching festival in Jerusalem, ver. 21. ¶ *Priscilla and Aquila.* See ver. 2. They had probably become converts to Christianity, during Paul's residence in Corinth. ¶ *Having shorn his head.* Interpreters are not fully agreed whether it was Paul or Aquila, whose head was shaven; but the larger part, and apparently for better reasons, suppose it was Paul. ¶ *Cenchrea.* The seaport on the eastern side of Corinth, from which passengers for Asia would naturally sail. A church was gathered in this place. Rom. xvi. 1. ¶ *He had a vow.* Many unprofitable conjectures have been offered concerning the reason or object of this vow. As the sacred writer has given no information on this point, we may properly leave it where he left it. It is sufficient, that vows were common among the Jews, and particular rules in regard to them are prescribed in the law.

19. *Ephesus.* A celebrated city of Ionia, in Asia Minor. Here was the magnificent temple of Diana, long accounted one of the wonders of the world, and the centre of attraction to vast multitudes of visitors. But, notwithstanding its former glory, Ephesus has become almost utterly desolate. Here was planted a church, to which Paul addressed one of his epistles. ¶ *Left them there.* That is, Aquila and Priscilla. ¶ *Reasoned with the Jews.*

20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not:

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

23 And after he had spent some

His desire for the conversion of his brethren was not overcome by their opposition; but, on every opportunity, he sought to convince them, by an appeal to their own scriptures, that Jesus was the true Messiah. He somewhat hyperbolically expresses his yearning desire for the conversion of his kinsmen according to the flesh, Rom. ix. 3.

20. *They desired*, &c. This is like a green spot in a desert. Instead of persecuting him, the Jews desired Paul to remain longer.

21. *Keep this feast*. One of the three great feasts, probably, when the Jews were so anxious to unite in the religious services of the temple at Jerusalem. ¶ *But I will return again*, &c. This promise he fulfilled, and, on his second visit, dwelt in Ephesus three years. Acts xix. 1; xx. 31.

22. *Cesarea*. See note on Acts viii. 40. ¶ *Gone up*. "Namely, to Jerusalem, and saluted the church there. This was his fourth journey thither, and he was then present at the feast of the passover, ver. 21. It was about twenty-one years after his conversion." —Pearce. This appears to be the most probable interpretation of the passage; though some suppose that Paul merely went up from the ship into the city of Cesarea, and conferred with the church there. ¶ *Saluted the church*. Expressed his christian sympathy and fellowship with his brethren. ¶ *Antioch*. Namely, Antioch in Syria.

23. *Country of Galatia and Phrygia*. The scene of his former labors. Acts xvi. 6. ¶ *Strengthening*. Confirming them in the faith, by further instruction and exhortation.

24. *Apollos*. The same who after-

time *there*, he departed and went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

24 ¶ And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

wards became a zealous preacher of the gospel, and so captivated his Corinthian hearers, that some of them preferred him even before Paul. 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 5, 6. ¶ *Alexandria*. A celebrated city in Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great. See note on Acts vi. 9. A vast multitude of Jews resided in this city, having schools and synagogues. ¶ *An eloquent man*. His natural powers had been cultivated in the schools; and, by studying the best masters, he had acquired the graces of oratory. ¶ *Mighty in the scriptures*. That is, in the Old Testament. He was familiarly acquainted with the sacred records, and able to wield their testimony readily against all gain-sayers. ¶ *Came to Ephesus*. Though he arrived after the departure of Paul, he is supposed to have been induced to visit Ephesus by the fame of that apostle's preaching.

25. *Was instructed*. Literally, was catechized; that is, taught according to the manner of the ancients. ¶ *Way of the Lord*. The doctrine concerning the Messiah is probably intended. He had learned a portion of the truth; but, manifestly, his knowledge was as yet imperfect. See ver. 26. ¶ *Fervent in spirit*. Ardent, full of zeal. ¶ *Things of the Lord*. Or, doctrines concerning the Lord. It is supposed that Apollos had a correct conception of the Messiah's character, but was ignorant that he had appeared; and that his mind was fully prepared to admit that the meek, and lowly, and crucified Jesus was the Son of God, as soon as he became acquainted with his character. ¶ *Baptism of John*. The visible emblem of the dispensation proclaimed by

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: Whom, when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.

John, introductory to the more full development of Christianity, is here put for the doctrines which he taught. Apollos had heard of John's appearance in the wilderness, and his declaration that a mightier than himself was at hand; and he confidently expected the speedy advent of the Messiah.

26. *The way of God more perfectly.* They perfected what was lacking in his faith, informing him that the Messiah he expected had already come, had performed and suffered the things written concerning him, and had been raised from the dead and received into glory. In short, they converted him from the faith of John to the faith of Jesus.

27. *Disposed to pass, &c.* His increase of religious knowledge inspired an accession of zeal; and he desired to communicate to his brethren elsewhere the glorious truths he had learned. Probably he had heard of the opposition of the Jews to Paul, at Corinth, in Achaia; and he desired to convince them that their opposition was unreasonable. Like most new converts, he imagined that others would embrace the truth as readily as himself, if he could only have an opportunity to address them. ¶ *Exhorting the disciples to receive him.* The brethren at Ephesus, having had more experience of the stubbornness of the Jews against the gospel of Christ, commended Apollos to the kind offices of more reliable friends, namely, the converts to Christianity. ¶ *Believed through grace.* "That is, through the favor of God were privileged to hear the preaching of the gospel, and thus were established in its belief, as a revelation of the mercy of God to the sinner."—*Livermore.* Others suppose the phrase "through grace" refers to Apol-

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

## CHAPTER XIX.

AND it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples,

los rather than to the believers; as if he was enabled by divine grace to *help them*. The original may bear either construction, and either yields a good sense; but the former is more natural, and is to be preferred.

28. *Mightily convinced the Jews.* Overpowered them by the strength and cogency of his arguments. He addressed them with a wisdom and power which they could neither gainsay nor resist. ¶ *Publicly.* In public places, as in the synagogues. ¶ *Jesus was Christ.* Rather, was *the* Christ. This fact he proved by an appeal to their own scriptures, whose authority they would not deny. He pointed out their mistake in supposing the Messiah should establish a temporal kingdom, and dazzle beholders with a blaze of earthly glory; and showed them that he had passed to a state of heavenly and immortal glory, through a path of meekness, humility, and suffering, which they had vainly imagined to be inconsistent with his exalted character. In short, he showed beyond contradiction, that the scriptures had been fulfilled in the person of Jesus, and that he was thus demonstrated as the Messiah, even by those events which they had supposed to prove him an impostor.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1. *The upper coasts.* That is, of Asia Minor, where Paul was now travelling, to visit the churches which he had formerly planted. Acts xviii. 23. Phrygia and Galatia were in the more elevated and mountainous region: these he visited first, and then descended to Ephesus, which was situated on the seacoast. ¶ *Came to Ephesus.* As he had promised, when he left that

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized?

city. Acts xviii. 21. ¶ *Certain disciples.* From what follows, these appear to have been disciples of John, ignorant, as Apollos had been, that the Messiah had actually appeared, or that the special energy of the divine Spirit had been communicated through him to men.

2. *Since ye believed.* "Since you embraced the doctrine of John, that the Messiah was soon to come."—*Barnes.* This is the common interpretation of the passage; yet it is not altogether satisfactory. I do not recollect an instance, in which the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred on a disciple of John, before his conversion to Christianity; and it is not easily perceived what should induce Paul to ask this evidence of faith in those whom he regarded merely as John's disciples. It seems more probable, that, when Paul came to Ephesus, he learned that there was a separate company of Jews, professing opinions concerning the Messiah, different from those entertained by their countrymen; that he visited them to ascertain if they were Christians; and that he inquired, at the outset, whether they possessed what he regarded as absolutely conclusive and undeniable proof of true conversion. In this view of the case, his question in ver. 3, is pertinent,—"Unto what then were ye baptized?" But if he recognized them, from the first, as disciples of John only, he also knew they had only received his baptism, or had been baptized into the profession of his doctrine, and need not have inquired.

¶ *We have not so much as heard, &c.* It seems singular, at first sight, that any Jew, especially in a city where the gospel had been preached, should never have heard that spiritual gifts had been bestowed on men; but it is no more singular, than that Apollos should not have heard, until he arrived in Ephesus, that a person had lived, and died, and been raised from the dead, in Judea, exactly corresponding to his own ideas concerning the Messiah. The

And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard *this*, they

whole connection denotes, that, when they said they had not heard there was a Holy Ghost, they did not mean to profess ignorance of the existence of the divine energy; but only to say they had not heard of its visible manifestation in men. See ver. 6; where it is plain that by the Holy Ghost is indicated its visible effects, the miraculous works its recipients were enabled to perform. "Paul asks them, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost?' They answer, 'We have not yet so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost be.' In which words, they refer to a common and a true tenet of the nation, which was, that 'after the death of Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Ghost departed and went up;' and they profess, they had never yet heard of his restoring."—*Lightfoot.* In other words, they had not heard that the divine energy was anew manifested in a signal manner.

3. *Unto what, &c.* Upon profession of what faith were you baptized? or, of what faith was your baptism a sign? ¶ *John's baptism.* See note on Acts xviii. 25.

4. *John verily baptized, &c.* With his customary tact, the apostle adapted his argument to the condition of his hearers. They had already advanced one step towards Christianity, and needed not to be convinced, by an appeal to the ancient prophets, that the time for the Messiah to appear had already come. They believed that already, upon John's testimony. To that testimony Paul referred, and assured them that Jesus was the very Christ or Messiah whose advent John foretold. His argument is not recorded; only its point or design is mentioned; but its effect was powerful; for it seems the whole number believed, received baptism, and manifested the customary signs of being filled with the Spirit, ver. 5—7.

5. *Heard this.* Namely, the proof that Jesus was the Messiah whom they were expecting. ¶ *Were baptized, &c.*

were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hard-

This is the only instance in which baptism is recorded to have been repeated. Yet it should be observed, that they had never before received Christian baptism, or baptism as a token and pledge of faith in Christianity. Even were it true, as very possibly it may be, that all John's disciples were rebaptized, on their profession of Christianity, it would not follow that Christians ought to be rebaptized, on every change of opinion or accession of religious knowledge. "One baptism," in the name of Jesus, or as a disciple of Jesus, is abundantly sufficient.

6. *Laid his hands.* See note on Acts viii. 17. ¶ *The Holy Ghost came on them.* That is, as it immediately follows, they were endowed with miraculous powers. See note on Acts i. 5.

7. *All the men.* The whole number of John's disciples, who were thus addressed and converted.

8. *Persuading the things.* Endeavoring to persuade or convince the people, that what he testified concerning the reign of Christ, or the dispensation of grace, was true. ¶ *Kingdom of God.* See note on Matt. iii. 2.

9. *Divers were hardened.* Several remained unbelieving. The truth made no impression on them. It is not necessarily implied that their hearts were harder than before; but, in the sacred writings, those are said to be hardened, who remain insensible to the power of truth. ¶ *Spake evil of that way.* Reproached the doctrine and practice advocated by Paul. ¶ *Departed from them.* Abandoned the synagogue, ver. 8, where he had addressed the Jews, and devoted himself to the instruction of the Gentiles. ¶ *Separated the disciples.* Namely, from the Jews; lest they should be

ened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were

harmful by the sneers or the more open abuse of unbelievers. He did not court opposition; but rather avoided it, as far as he could do so with a clear conscience. ¶ *In the school.* In the hall or room occupied by a Gentile teacher of philosophy. ¶ *Tyrannus.* Nothing further is known of this person. It may be inferred that he was not unfriendly to Paul; and he may have been an adherent.

10. *This continued.* That is, the instruction of the people in this new place of assembling. ¶ *Two years.* Here, and in ver. 8, we have an account of two years and three months' residence in Ephesus; but in Acts xx. 31, Paul declares he spent three years there. Some reconcile the two accounts, by supposing that he dwelt in Ephesus nine months, besides the periods during which he preached in the synagogue and in the school of Tyrannus; but others suppose that the period of three years was intended to embrace both visits, including the time spent in revisiting Galatia and Phrygia. See Acts xviii. 22, 23. ¶ *All they which dwell in Asia, &c.* Vast multitudes heard his testimony. The knowledge of the gospel was widely diffused. Ephesus, being a central and important city, attracted a large concourse of strangers, as well as the dwellers in the region round about; and thus an opportunity was afforded to make the gospel more generally known. See note on Matt. iii. 5.

11. *Special miracles.* Literally, not common miracles. Some of these unusual, remarkable miracles are recorded in the following verses.

12. *Handkerchiefs.* This word strict

brought unto the sick handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

13 ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

ly signifies, in the original, the cloth used to wipe off perspiration; though, as with us, the same article was also used for other purposes. Thus the same word is rendered "napkin," in Luke xix. 20; John xi. 44; xx. 7: but, for the purposes there indicated, a handkerchief, in the present acceptation of the word, might be used. ¶ *Aprons.* Half girdles, or pieces of cloth girded about the waist, to prevent the other clothes from becoming soiled.

¶ *Diseases departed.* When such garments as had been used or touched by Paul were applied to the sick, who, on account of their distance, could not conveniently be visited by him, they were healed of their diseases. ¶ *Evil spirits went out of them.* See note on Mark v. 1. "In other words, cases of insanity, epilepsy, and lunacy, were cured. It is contended by some, that the possessions must have been literally true; that evil and wicked spirits did actually enter into men, and possess them, because such cases are distinguished, as here, from other diseases. They are, indeed, so distinguished from others; but for the same reason that leprosy is distinguished from other disorders, Matt. x. 8, namely, on account of its greater severity and incurableness."—

*Livermore.* The argument for the personality of evil spirits, founded on the expression that they *went out*, is sufficiently answered by the fact that the *diseases* also departed. If *to go out* implies the personal existence and agency of the evil spirits, *to depart* implies the same fact in regard to the diseases, with equal force and certainty.

13. *Vagabond Jews.* Jews having no settled residence, but travelling from place to place. With us, the word *vagabond* is generally understood to imply something vicious in the moral character; but such is not its original import. ¶ *Exorcists.* The original

14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled

signifies, binding with an oath. Those who pretended to have power over demons were accustomed to adjure them, or require them, under the power of an oath, to obey. To adjure another by the living God was supposed to bind him by the most solemn and tremendous oath. See note on Matt. xxvi. 63. ¶ *To call over them, &c.* To use the name of Jesus, in their exorcisms. Possibly, they regarded Paul as an adventurer, like themselves; and seeing the wonders which he wrought in the name of Jesus, they supposed they might perform the same. Unlike Simon the magician, they did not attempt to purchase the gift of God with money, Acts viii. 18—20; for they supposed they had discovered Paul's secret without paying for it; otherwise, their character strongly resembles Simon's. ¶ *We adjure, &c.* The common form of Jewish exorcisms, of which Lightfoot has preserved several samples.

14. *Sceva.* A Greek name; but of the individual nothing is known beyond what is here recorded. From his name, we may conclude that he was a Hellenist, not a native of Judea. ¶ *Chief of the priests.* One of eminent rank and authority.

15. *The evil spirit answered.* That is, the insane man, who was supposed, and probably supposed himself, to be possessed. ¶ *Jesus I know, and Paul I know.* He knew Paul personally, who had dwelt in Ephesus more than two years. He knew Jesus, from Paul's testimony. Whether he had ever heard Paul preach, is not material. It was a matter of general notoriety that Paul preached Jesus, as the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament and expected by the Jews. ¶ *But who are ye.* A question, not of inquiry, but of derision and contempt.

16. *Leaped on them.* The original word is the same which denotes the

out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

springing of a wild beast upon his prey. ¶ *Naked and wounded.* They were utterly overpowered by the violence of the madman. The supernatural strength of the insane is proverbial. It is well known that it requires the power of several strong men to control an insane person when the fit is on him, who, in his lucid intervals, is weak and powerless, almost as a child.

17. *Fear fell on them all.* The presence of the divine energy in Paul became more manifest, by the signal discomfiture of those who attempted to perform similar miracles. The difference between a devout apostle and wicked pretenders could not be overlooked; for while the insane and lunatic, as well as epileptic, yielded to him, they resisted and overpowered the others. As a natural result, it is declared, that *the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*; that is, it was the more respected and honored by the people, not only by disciples, but by others also. They revered that power which was manifested in the servant, and rightly judged that the Master must be highly exalted.

18. *Confessed and showed their deeds.* Or, actions, or course of life. Special reference seems to be had to evil practices, or crimes of which they had formerly been guilty. These were proper subjects of confession. To confess one's faults is a material step towards their amendment.

19. *Curious arts.* See note on Acts viii. 9. The original properly denotes skilful and dexterous acts, and is thus applied to feats of jugglery or sleight of hand. The so-called magical arts were extensively practised at Ephesus. The *Ephesian Letters* are mentioned by ancient writers, in connection with such arts. Words composed of these letters, and uttered in a peculiar man-

19 Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

21 ¶ After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit,

ner, were represented as exceedingly powerful; and the same or similar words, engraved on tablets, and worn upon the body, were regarded as amulets which would shield the wearer from harm. ¶ *Brought their books.* Or scrolls, on which were written directions for the practice of their curious arts. It is not improbable that some facts in natural science, in chemistry for example, were herein recorded: of these the skilful adepts could avail themselves to astonish and bewilder their ignorant countrymen, and acquire to themselves the credit of supernatural powers. ¶ *Burned them.* They not only confessed and forsook their evil practices, but destroyed the books which taught the manner of performing feats of science, or of jugglery, legerdemain, and the like. They were not content to forsake evil personally, but endeavored to prevent others from becoming in like manner sinful. They did not, like some in more recent times, for the sake of gain, sell to others what they regarded as hurtful to themselves; but chose rather to suffer some pecuniary loss. ¶ *Fifty thousand pieces of silver.* As the value of the coin here mentioned is not known, the sum total cannot be accurately computed. Some estimate it as high as twenty-five thousand dollars, and others as low as seven thousand dollars. The precise amount is not material; but the manner in which it is mentioned indicates a large sum.

20. *So mightily grew, &c.* This is the fact proved by the preceding evidence. The gospel took such deep root in the hearts of men, as induced them cheerfully to suffer pecuniary loss,—sometimes represented as the severest test of faith. The love of riches is not a new evil under the sun. It brought a snare and temptation upon many in old time. But the grace of



when he had passed through Macedonia, and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

God is able to eradicate even this deep-seated vice, as is manifest from the case here recorded. Would that it might be as effectual universally! Then would the conduct of professed Christians better correspond with the precepts of their religion; and they would no longer injure their brethren for the sake of pecuniary gain.

21. *Purposed in the spirit.* Determined, or resolved, in his own mind. ¶ *Macedonia and Achaia.* Where he had before established churches. These he desired to visit, on his way to Jerusalem, that he might give such further instructions as their situation demanded, and encourage the brethren in well-doing. From Rom. xv. 25, 26, it has been supposed, with some probability, that one object of the apostle, in visiting Achaia and Macedonia, was to collect alms for the brethren in Jerusalem. ¶ *I must also see Rome.* This desire was deeply cherished by Paul. Rome was then the most important city in the world, and it was natural that he should wish there to bear his testimony to the truth. His wish was ultimately gratified, and he preached the gospel in Rome; but he went as a prisoner, and in chains. Nevertheless he had the rich satisfaction of there preaching Jesus "with all confidence, no man forbidding him," Acts xxviii. 30, 31. So long as this liberty was accorded to him, he patiently submitted to other bonds.

22. *Timotheus.* The same Timothy mentioned in Acts xvi. 1, a disciple especially dear to the apostle. ¶ *Erastus.* Supposed to be the same who is called the chamberlain or treasurer of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23. If so, he was well qualified to superintend the collection for the benefit of the church at Jerusalem. ¶ *In Asia.* That is, in Ephesus. ¶ *For a season.* How long does not appear; perhaps long enough

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silver-smith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth:

to complete the period of three years. See note on ver. 10.

23. *No small stir.* Disturbance, or excitement; its character is described in the succeeding verses. ¶ *About that way.* Concerning the doctrine preached by Paul. This form of expression frequently occurs in this sense.

24. *Silversmith.* One who manufactures articles of silver. ¶ *Silver shrines.* Literally, silver temples. These were probably miniature models of the magnificent temple erected to Diana in Ephesus. It was a common custom of idolaters to carry with them, or keep in their dwellings, images of their divinities. These miniature temples may therefore be supposed to have served as boxes or coffers, in which miniature images of Diana were deposited. Devotees would freely purchase these for religious purposes; and strangers might desire to possess a representation of that temple which was denominated one of the seven wonders of the world. ¶ *Diana.* Accounted one of the twelve principal deities, by the heathens. She was worshipped not only in Ephesus, but by most heathen nations, under various names, and with different shades of character. But nowhere else were her rites celebrated with so much pomp and magnificence as at Ephesus. ¶ *Craftsmen.* The workers of silver are specially intended, probably those who were employed by Demetrius.

25. *Whom he called together, &c.* He assembled not only his own workmen, but others who manufactured similar articles, and excited them to resist a doctrine which endangered their prosperity. ¶ *This craft.* This business or occupation. The word is not to be understood in the bad sense often attached to it. ¶ *We have our wealth.* Or, we gain a livelihood. The

26 Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands.

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence

should be destroyed, whom all Asia, and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

idea is simply, We obtain our living by the profits of our occupation.

26. *Paul hath persuaded.* By the testimony of an enemy, the zeal and success of Paul are fully avouched. He had made many converts in Ephesus; and in all that region of Asia, his influence was felt. He had excited general attention to the gospel; many embraced it; many thought well of it. ¶ *No gods.* See note on Acts xiv. 15. The heathens had sufficient sagacity to perceive that, if the doctrine of the one true God prevailed, their theory of a multiplicity of gods must be overturned; in short that the establishment of Christianity involved the overthrow of idolatry.

27. *Our craft is in danger, &c.* Our trade is in danger of being ruined; for, if men cease to worship Diana, they will not buy shrines; and, if they cease to purchase these, we shall be thrown out of employment. This was unquestionably the main cause which excited Demetrius, and which induced him to excite others, to violent opposition against Paul and the disciples. He had more honesty than some in more recent times; for he openly avowed his motives, while they have endeavored to conceal theirs. ¶ *Temple—should be despised.* Very probably he was attached to the idolatrous worship to which he had been accustomed from childhood, and had a sort of reverence for the goddess and a regard to her glory. There can be no question that such was the fact in regard to the populace generally; it was abundantly manifested by their vociferous shouts and acclamations, ver. 28. ¶ *And the world.* Other parts of the world besides Asia. Diana was a goddess of the Romans, as well as of the Greeks.

So extensive was her worship, that it was said, in common phrase, to fill the world.

28. *Full of wrath.* Indignant and enraged, that Paul and his coadjutors should thus interfere with their business, and detract from the honor of their favorite deity. ¶ *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* It appears from the testimony of Xenophon, that this deity was styled the "Great Diana of the Ephesians." However this be, her devotees endeavored to manifest their regard for her, and their indignation against her enemies, by vociferating her name energetically. This they did, subsequently, for the space of two hours without intermission, ver. 34.

29. *Confusion.* Excitement and tumult. ¶ *Gaius.* The same, probably, who had lived in Corinth, and whom Paul had baptized. 1 Cor. i. 14. ¶ *Aristarchus.* Paul mentions one of the same name, and probably the same person, in Col. iv. 10. ¶ *The theatre.* The place where public shows were exhibited. These theatres, or amphitheatres, as they are often termed, were constructed without roofs, of immense size, with a large open area in the centre, surrounded by many rows of seats, gradually rising above each other in height, so that those who were seated at the greatest distance might have a distinct view of whatever transpired in the area. In these places of public resort the people were accustomed to assemble, not only to witness the games and spectacles there exhibited, but also for purposes of public consultation. To the theatre, therefore, the unoffending disciples of Christ were dragged, that the populace, excited to fury by the artful suggestions of interested opposers, might administer summary judgment and execution.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

30. *Paul would have entered.* When Paul heard that his friends were in such jeopardy, he desired to rescue them, and for this purpose was willing to hazard his own life. ¶ *Disciples suffered him not.* They would not permit him to put his life in peril, in what they regarded as a hopeless undertaking.

31. *Chief of Asia.* Literally, *Asiarchs*, a class of officers appointed to superintend public games and spectacles, and to take care that the customary religious rites were duly performed. They held their authority from the Roman government. Those who are here mentioned were friendly to the apostle, and desirous to preserve him from harm; for they sent to caution him against exposure to personal harm.

32. *Some therefore cried one thing, and some another.* This expression well denotes the confusion of a mob,—the discordant and tumultuous shouts of a multitude, having no definite or settled plan of operation. ¶ *The more part knew not wherefore,* &c. As is usual in a popular tumult, many were utterly ignorant of the cause: the mere fact that a mob is assembled, or that a commotion exists, is sufficient to draw a multitude together from curiosity or love of excitement.

33. *Alexander.* Grotius and others suppose this was "Alexander the coppersmith," mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 14; and his occupation, being similar to that of Demetrius, renders the conjecture plausible. But nothing is known of him with certainty, further than that he was a Jew, and evidently not friendly to Paul. ¶ *The Jews putting him forward.* As Paul was a Jew, it seems to have been apprehended that the

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

35 And when the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is

fury of the populace would be turned against all that race. The Jewish unbelievers therefore desired to convince the Ephesians that they had no fellowship with Paul and his friends; and they might hope thus to escape personal harm, and perhaps at the same time increase the excitement against the Christians. ¶ *Would have made his defence.* Literally, would have apologized; that is, would have endeavored to give such an explanation of the difference between Paul and other Jews, as to accomplish the object desired.

34. *Knew that he was a Jew.* The mob made no very nice distinctions. They knew the Jews did not worship Diana. They cared little what other form of worship was practised, so long as their own was disregarded. Hence they would not listen to any explanation. ¶ *About the space of two hours,* &c. The heathen were addicted to "vain repetitions." See note on Matt. vi. 7. The Ephesians, however, were less extravagant than the priests of Baal, who shouted his name for a whole forenoon. 1 Kings xviii. 26.

35. *The town-clerk.* Or, *scribe*, as the same word is frequently translated in the New Testament. The person here named filled a much more responsible station than those who are now thus denominated. He was not merely a clerical but also an executive officer, charged with the preservation of the peace. He was manifestly a man of prudence and ability,—using few words, and such as were strictly applicable to his subject, and effectual in operation. ¶ *That knoweth not,* &c. As much as to say, What possible good can result from all this uproar and confusion? Everybody knows that the

there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither rob-

citizens of Ephesus are worshippers of Diana. Why, then, vociferate so extravagantly what nobody doubts?

¶ *Which fell down from Jupiter.* The image at Ephesus was doubtless ancient; its maker was forgotten, and the people adopted the belief that it fell from heaven. A like pretence was made concerning the *black stone* at Mecca, the *Palladium* at Troy, the *Ancilia* or Shields of Mars at Rome, and others of similar character. Indeed it is not improbable that some of them may have fallen from meteors, as it is well known that metallic substances have thus fallen. But men are too well informed, at present, to regard such substances with superstitious veneration. Not so, however, in former times, and among idolatrous nations.

36 *Seeing, then, &c.* As this matter is fully understood and known, there is no need of so much commotion and vociferation. The idea is, that there was no cause to apprehend that a handful of Jews, whether of one sect or another, could convince the world that the Ephesians did not honor Diana. ¶ *Be quiet.* Calm, composed. The same word is rendered *appeased* in ver. 35. ¶ *Do nothing rashly.* When men act under the influence of a violent excitement, they generally go beyond the bounds of prudence and discretion, and frequently regret their rash conduct when the hour of cool reflection comes. The Ephesians were wisely cautioned against this folly; and, as an inducement to avoid it, they were assured that there was no pressing emergency sufficient to justify it; there was time enough to act deliberately.

37 *For ye, &c.* Demetrius and his companions. By seizing the friends of Paul, and dragging them to the theatre, they had occasioned all the uproar. ¶ *Neither robbers of churches, &c.*

bers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

38 Wherefore, if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be

Namely, the sacred places dedicated to the service of heathen deities; with special reference, probably, to the temple of Diana. The translation by Haweis more accurately expresses the idea: "neither robbers of the temple, nor blasphemers of your goddess." Paul preached, and his brethren believed, a doctrine opposite to that in which the Ephesians had been educated. But neither he nor they had committed sacrilege in the temple, nor used reproachful epithets when speaking of idols. In short, no crime had been alleged against them which could justify such a violent excitement.

38 *Have a matter against, &c.* Any allegation of injustice or injury. If any person has injured Demetrius or his companions in reputation or estate, there are judicial tribunals having special jurisdiction over such matters; there are ample means of redress without tumult. ¶ *The law is open.* Rather, there are court days; that is, appointed times for hearing and determining complaints. ¶ *Deputies.* Proconsuls, who were empowered to act in a judicial as well as in an executive capacity. See note on Acts xiii. 7. ¶ *Implead.* Allege their charges, and argue the case.

39 *But if ye inquire, &c.* If your cause of complaint be something not recognized by the law as a crime. ¶ *Lawful assembly.* In an assembly convened in an orderly manner. Their present meeting was riotous and disorderly; and the recorder, or clerk, was bound to disperse the people, if possible. But he intimated, that, if any thing rendered a public meeting necessary or expedient, it might be called in conformity to law, and the whole matter be properly discussed.

40 *Danger to be called in question, &c.* Namely, by the Roman government, which was very severe concern-

called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

## CHAPTER XX.

AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them

ing riots, punishing their instigators or prime-movers with death. Having partially calmed the excited multitude, the magistrate appealed to their regard for personal security; and his appeal was successful. Throughout, his remarks indicate his good sense, and his fitness for the office he sustained.

41. *Dismissed the assembly.* The same word is used here which is often translated *church*. It indicates merely an assembly of people, without specially denoting their character, whether good or bad. In this case, the greater part were idolaters. They came together in a high state of excitement. They seem to have departed in much better temper.

## CHAPTER XX.

1. *After the uproar, &c.* Namely, that described in the preceding chapter. Paul had tarried a long time in Ephesus, and had made preparations to depart on his journey to Jerusalem. Acts xix. 8, 10, 21. But the violent commotion excited by Demetrius seems to have hastened his departure, under the impression that his longer continuance with a people, whose minds were inflamed with jealousy, would not be profitable. ¶ *Macedonia.* See Acts xix. 21. It is supposed that Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, during his stay in Macedonia, sending it by the hand of Titus.

2. *Those parts.* The region of Macedonia and its vicinity, where the apostle had already established churches. ¶ *Greece.* The other Roman province,

much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

5 These going before, tarried for us at Troas.

sometimes called Achaia, and sometimes Greece proper.

3. *And there abode.* Probably at Corinth, whence he is supposed to have written his epistle to the Romans. ¶ *The Jews laid wait for him.* Formed a design against him. Thus it was, wherever he went; his most bitter enemies were his own countrymen. ¶ *About to sail.* The connection implies that the Jews intended to attack him as he was about embarking, or while at sea; for, to escape the snare, he abandoned this voyage, and pursued his journey by a more circuitous route. By this means, the churches in Macedonia enjoyed yet another visit from him.

4. *Accompanied him, &c.* It appears that the brethren here named, though they went into Asia with Paul, did not accompany him through Macedonia, but met him at Troas, ver. 5. ¶ *Sopater.* Generally supposed to be a kinsman of Paul, and called Sosipater in Rom. xvi. 21. ¶ *Aristarchus.* See Acts xix. 29. ¶ *Secundus.* Nothing further is known of this disciple. ¶ *Gaius of Derbe.* Acts xix. 29; 1 Cor. i. 14. ¶ *Timotheus.* The beloved Timothy, so often named. ¶ *Tychicus.* See Eph. vi. 21, where this disciple is described as "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." ¶ *Trophimus.* See Acts xxi. 29; 2 Tim. iv. 20.

5. *Going before, tarried for us, &c.* The historian again represents himself as being in company with the apostle. He was with Paul at Philippi, Acts xvi. 12; but, from the form of his narrative, seems not to have accompanied

6 And we sailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, (ready to depart on the morrow) and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights

him in his subsequent travels until now.

6. *Days of unleavened bread.* The days of the Jewish passover, namely, when the use of leaven was prohibited by the law. ¶ *Troas.* See note, Acts xvi. 8. ¶ *In five days.* The former passage of Paul across the Egean Sea occupied only two days, Acts xvi. 11, 12. But, on that occasion, the winds were more favorable.

7. *First day of the week.* At a very early period, this day was set apart by the Christians, for religious worship, instead of the seventh, or Jewish Sabbath. This change was made, according to the uniform testimony of the fathers, in commemoration of the resurrection of our blessed Lord; and the Christian Sabbath remains a standing monument of that important event. ¶ *To break bread.* It seems to have been the practice of the early Christians to celebrate the Lord's Supper every week; and, indeed, at their religious meetings, on whatever day in the week. See Acts ii. 46. ¶ *Until midnight.* The discourse, in fact, continued until break of day, ver. 11; but an interruption occurred at midnight, which is mentioned in ver. 9. It is not probable, that Paul continued speaking all the while in one continuous discourse. But, as he was to depart on the next day, and the brethren knew not whether they should ever again see his face, ver. 38, it was natural that they should desire instruction on many points; and very probably they proposed their difficulties, one by one, and he answered, in order, until morning.

8. *Many lights.* "Whatever the malice of their enemies might insinuate, the Christians held not their assemblies in darkness, but took all prudent

in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him*, said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

precautions to avoid every circumstance that might incur censure or even suspicion."—*Doddridge.* It has been suggested, also, that the historian may have mentioned this fact, to indicate that the room where the disciples met, was a regular place of worship; as it was a common practice both of Jews and Gentiles to burn many lamps in such places.

9. *Sat in a window.* The window was a hole cut in the wall, and closed with a shutter, or lattice work; for it must be remembered that glass had not then been manufactured. This window was open for ventilation, either on account of the weather, or the burning of so many lamps, or the crowded state of the room, or for all these reasons combined. ¶ *Third loft.* Or, third story. ¶ *Taken up dead.* Some suppose the young man was stunned, but not killed, by his fall; and they quote ver. 10, in support of their supposition. But the more general and more probable opinion is, that he was actually dead, and was miraculously restored to life. His falling asleep, on such an interesting occasion, need excite no surprise, when the lateness of the hour and the crowded state of the room are considered.

10. *Fell on him.* This probably means, that Paul prostrated himself on the body of the young man, as Elisha did on a similar occasion, 2 Kings iv. 34. It may, however, mean no more than that he bent over him, embracing him in his arms, and raising him up. ¶ *His life is in him.* See note on ver. 9. His life is now in him, though it had departed; in other words, his life is restored.

11. *Come up again.* That is, to the upper room, in which the assembly was

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 ¶ And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

held. ¶ *Broken bread and eaten.* Some suppose that Paul alone took bread at this time, for refreshment. But the more probable interpretation is, that he now celebrated with his brethren the eucharist, or the breaking of bread in memory of Jesus, — one principal purpose for which they had assembled. See ver. 7.

12. *Not a little comforted.* Happy that the young man was alive and well, and strengthened in faith by the miracle they had witnessed.

13. *Sailed unto Assos.* There were several cities of this name. But the one here intended was manifestly between Troas and Mitylene, in Epirus. The distance thither from Troas was much greater by water than by land: hence Paul preferred to go on foot, while he sent the others forward by sea. ¶ *Minding.* Choosing, determining.

14. *Mitylene.* The capital of Lesbos, an island situated in the Ægean Sea, near the westerly coast of Mysia, and about thirty miles south of Assos. This island was famous as the birth-place of Sappho, the celebrated poetess, and of Pitacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece.

15. *Chios.* An island between Lesbos and Samos, now called Scio, the scene of a most horrible butchery by the Turks, during the Greek revolution, A.D. 1823. More than half the inhabitants of this beautiful island were massacred, and the remainder sold as slaves, or driven into exile. ¶ *Samos.* "An island of the Archipelago, on the coast of Asia Minor, opposite Lydia, from which it is separated by a narrow

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 ¶ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come

strait. The island was devoted to the worship of Juno, who had there a magnificent temple. It was also celebrated for its valuable potteries, and as the birth-place of Pythagoras." — *Culmet.* ¶ *Trogyllium.* A town situated on a promontory of the same name, on the coast of Ionia, opposite to Samos. ¶ *Miletus.* A seaport, formerly the capital of Ionia. "This city was originally a colony of Cretans; but at length became so powerful, that it sent out settlers to a great number of cities on the Euxine Sea, and many others on the continent. What most contributed to its renown was a magnificent temple of Apollo." — *Culmet.*

16. *To sail by Ephesus.* There is an ambiguity in our translation; it may mean, *to sail by the way of*, or *to sail past*, that is, to sail beyond, without touching at, the place. The latter is the idea here conveyed. ¶ *He hastied.* And was therefore unwilling to be delayed so long as the brethren would have desired him to remain, had he visited Ephesus. ¶ *Pentecost.* See note on Acts ii. 1.

17. *Sent to Ephesus.* Distant some thirty or forty miles from Miletus. ¶ *Called the elders, &c.* Those who had been appointed overseers of the flock, ver. 28, or spiritual advisers and guides to the brethren composing the church at Ephesus.

18. *Ye know.* He had dwelt three years in their city. He had labored also in their vicinity. They knew his course of life; and to their knowledge of him he appealed. ¶ *Asia.* Asia Minor is here specially intended. —

to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

¶ *After what manner, &c.* How I have conducted, and what spirit I have manifested. With the approbation of his own conscience, Paul did not hesitate to appeal to them, to testify from their own knowledge, whether or not he had behaved with propriety, and as a true disciple of Jesus. Would that every preacher might so behave as to appeal to his hearers with equal confidence and equal success!

19. *Serving the Lord.* Preaching his word, and obeying his will. ¶ *With all humility of mind.* Though conscious of a divine commission and miraculous powers, Paul never suffered pride to reign in his heart. He was uniformly modest, meek, humble. Instead of boasting of his superior endowments, he deplored his infirmities and imperfections. ¶ *With many tears.* *Many* is omitted by Griesbach and Knapp. The sorrow, of which these tears were the manifestation, was occasioned by the opposition of his own countrymen, who not only exhibited ingratitude for his labors of love, but also impeded his exertions for the benefit of others. This filled the bosom of the apostle with sorrow, and moved him to tears. ¶ *Temptations.* Rather, trials. In the scriptures this word generally indicates *trials* of whatever kind, rather than *inducements to sin*, in which confined and technical sense it is now chiefly used. ¶ *Lying in wait.* The secret designs. See note on ver. 3. ¶ *Of the Jews.* The apostle scarcely encountered any opposition which was not instigated by his natural kinsmen.

20. *Kept back nothing, &c.* He had taught, and exhorted, and warned, and admonished. Whatever of doctrine or practical advice was necessary, he had freely and frankly imparted. His object was not to gratify itching ears, but to exhibit the truth in a clear and powerful light; not to please the fancy,

20 *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now behold, I go bound

but to instruct the intellect and purify the heart. He had concealed nothing; he had disguised nothing. But, as a faithful servant of the Master, he had delivered his message plainly and fully. ¶ *Publicly.* At the stated times and places appointed for religious worship. ¶ *From house to house.* In his daily intercourse with the people, in their houses, he had inculcated the great truths of the gospel.

21. *Both to the Jews and also to the Greeks.* The same doctrine was taught to all, and the same precepts enforced. Though the Jews had in some respects enjoyed superior advantages, it was nevertheless true that they as well as the Gentiles needed salvation; for all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Rom. iii. 23. The repentance and faith, therefore, which the apostle urged, were equally necessary to both classes. ¶ *Repentance toward God.* Repentance was the first duty enjoined by the forerunner of Jesus, and by our Lord himself. See Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17. ¶ *Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* Or, faith in respect to the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, faith in him as a person whose divine commission was fully attested by his purity of life, his sanctifying doctrines, his miraculous powers, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven. Such faith in him necessarily implies a full confidence in the truth of all his precepts, declarations, admonitions, and promises.

22. *Bound in the spirit.* Impelled by a strong and irresistible conviction of duty. He was not influenced by curiosity, a regard for personal convenience, or even by his general desire to preach the gospel to all men, whenever and wherever he could have the opportunity. But he was strongly impressed with an idea that a special duty was required of him in Jerusalem; and he



in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the

was not a man to hesitate, or shrink back, whenever a path of duty was distinctly presented before him. He was ready to perform his whole duty, at whatever personal hazard, and to leave the result with God. A noble example for imitation; but how few imitate it! ¶ *Not knowing the things, &c.* He had no revelation on this point. He was confident that severe trials awaited him. But their peculiar nature and results he knew not. Yet, with a firm confidence in God, and an unwavering devotion to duty, he was ready to encounter whatever awaited him.

23. *Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth, &c.* He was ignorant concerning the future, except that the Holy Spirit, by impressions on his own mind, or by the predictions of other inspired persons, (as in Acts xxi. 10, 11,) had taught him to expect persecution and violence in every city wherein he should attempt to discharge the duty assigned him. ¶ *Abide me.* Await me.

24. *None of these things move me, &c.* "Rather, 'I have no regard to any thing, nor have I my life dear to me, that I may finish,' &c. That is, I prefer the finishing my course with joy before every thing, even life itself."—*Pearce.* ¶ *Neither count I my life dear, &c.* I do not love life so strongly as to be willing to neglect my duty for its preservation. I am ready to sacrifice life itself, if such be the divine will, in the execution of the work assigned me. ¶ *So that.* Provided. The sense seems to be this: I am ready to endure all trials, and even to sacrifice life itself, provided only that, thus doing, I may enjoy the testimony of a good conscience, witnessing the faithful performance of my whole duty. ¶ *Finish my course.* Or, my race. The

ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to

figure is borrowed from the ancient games. The idea is, if I may accomplish my appointed labor. See note on Acts xiii. 25. ¶ *And the ministry.* Perhaps, *even the ministry* would express the idea quite as accurately; for this was the great duty of his life. To preach the gospel of the grace of God, to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, to proclaim salvation through him from sin, was regarded by Paul as his imperative duty. 1 Cor. ix. 16.

25. *I know, &c.* I am confident. The original does not express absolute certainty, but a firm persuasion. It is thought by some writers, though on questionable grounds, that Paul subsequently revisited this region, contrary to his expectation so solemnly expressed.

26. *Wherefore.* In view of my former labors and conduct, on this our final parting, I make my appeal to your own consciences. ¶ *I take you to record.* I call you to bear witness. ¶ *Pure from the blood of all men.* In regard to both Jews and Gentiles, I am not accessory to their guilt and unbelief, nor accountable for any of their misdeeds. I have proclaimed the gospel of grace; I have unfolded its precious promises; I have exhibited its life-giving power; I have faithfully enforced its warnings and admonitions; and now, if any remain destitute of its blessings, if any reject it and become involved in the punishment of the disobedient and blasphemers, I am free from all participation in their guilt or its consequences. I have performed my duty: let them perform theirs with equal faithfulness.

27. *For.* Because. He stated again the reason why he claimed to be absolved from all guilt in regard to others; namely, that he had faithfully preached, and warned, and exhorted. ¶ *I*

declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28 ¶ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over

*have not shunned to declare, &c.* He had neither kept back nor disguised any important truth. The hope of pleasing some, or the fear of offending others, had never induced him to conceal the truth he was commissioned to declare; but he had openly and plainly made known all which had been communicated to him as the divine will. That he had been thus faithful in his ministry and apostleship, he appealed to all who had known his manner of life, during his long residence in Asia Minor, ver. 18, 26.

28. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves.* Personal watchfulness, an ever-active exertion to resist temptation, is properly and urgently enjoined, as the first and most important duty. Especially should this admonition be heeded by religious teachers. "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?"

1. Tim. iii. 5. How much more, then, is he unable to guide the flock of Christ, who knoweth not how to restrain his own passions, nor how to resist temptation! Let him who would profitably guide and direct others be careful that he walk in the path of truth and godliness. Ponder the exhortation of the apostle, Rom. ii. 21—24. ¶ *The flock.* The church. The figure is taken from the pastoral customs of the East, very familiar to the persons addressed. As the faithful shepherd guides and protects his flock, so should the minister of Christ direct them who are committed to his charge, guide them in the right way, and be watchful to shield them from harm, by external or internal enemies. The same figure is pursued by the apostle, to the end of the succeeding verse. ¶ *Overseers.* This is a literal translation of the original *ἐπισκόπους* (*ἐπισκόπους*), frequently rendered *bishops*, and from which is derived the word *episcopal*. The title *overseer* well and aptly describes the true nature of the office denoted by it. An overseer is commissioned, not to govern the consciences of men, but to be watchful over them, to warn them of danger, and show them how to obtain blessings. ¶ *To feed the church.* The figure here

the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

becomes mixed. To feed the flock, or to provide for the church, is the idea. Of course spiritual food is indicated. ¶ *Of God.* Much controversy has been had, for ages, concerning the correctness of this reading; and, indeed, the controversy is not yet ended. Several MSS. have *of God*; but others have, *of the Lord*. At the present day, though the question is not regarded as entirely settled, the most judicious Trinitarian critics allow that *the church of the Lord* is probably the genuine and true reading of the passage. To say nothing of the extravagance of such a metaphor as "blood of God," the weight of authority is allowed to preponderate against it. Among the multitude which might be adduced, I content myself with a single testimony. "The reading which now occurs in our text is found in no ancient MSS. except the Vatican codex; and occurs nowhere among the writings of the fathers, except in Athanasius, in regard to whom also there is a various reading. It is retained, however, by Beza, Mill, and Whitby, as the genuine reading. The most ancient MSS., and the best, read *the church of the Lord*; and this probably was the genuine text. It has been adopted by Griesbach and Wetstein; and many important reasons may be given why it should be retained."—*Barnes*. ¶ *Purchased.* Or, acquired. The same word occurs in 1 Tim. iii. 13. Much useless speculation has been indulged concerning the question of whom the church was purchased; as if there was a regular bargain and sale, as of so much marketable commodity. The meaning is simply that Christ obtained or acquired the church, made it his own, by his labors and the sacrifice of his life on its behalf; just as (if it be lawful thus to compare spiritual with earthly things) the farmer obtains a harvest, or purchases or makes it his own, by the sweat of his face, and the toil bestowed on the cultivation of his fields. ¶ *His own blood.* Equivalent to his own life. Blood is often used in this sense. Special reference is doubtless had to the crucifixion of our Lord.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years

“The doctrine of a vicarious atonement finds no support in passages like the present, for it is popular language. Emphasis is laid upon *the blood, the death, the cross*, of Christ, because he thus showed his love; and because his death, and the subsequent events, proved him to be a spiritual Messiah, and not the temporal one expected by the Jews.”—*Livermore*.

29. *For I know*, &c. Past experience, and a profound knowledge of human nature, to say nothing of divine inspiration, enabled the apostle to foresee that the flock of Christ would be exposed to dangers, both from without and from within. Hence his urgent exhortation that the overseers should be watchful. ¶ *Grievous wolves*. Persecutors and destroyers. The wolf was the most dangerous enemy to which sheep were exposed in the East. See note on Matt. x. 16. ¶ *Not sparing the flock*. Destroying, or seeking to destroy, the church. Allusion is probably made to the Jews, in particular, as they had uniformly manifested the most deadly hostility to the church.

30. *Also of your own selves*, &c. Their foes should be of their own household. Heretics and schismatics would arise, who, for the sake of increasing their own party, would not hesitate to pervert the truth. This prediction was verified, even during the lifetime of the apostles. And the same trial has been repeated, from time to time, even until now. Not only have men endeavored to establish new sects, professing the essentials of Christianity in divers forms, but there have not been wanting those who, under the name and garb of Christianity, have sought to sap its very foundations, and overturn the whole fabric. Such persons are more to be dreaded than open and undisguised enemies; and they should be watched with a more vigilant

I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

eye, lest they betray with a kiss, and destroy what they profess a desire to build up and establish.

31. *Therefore watch*. Be on your guard against the dangers indicated.

¶ *Three years*. See note on Acts xix.

10. It may be that the time is stated in round numbers, without intending to include the full period of three entire years. ¶ *Night and day*. Continually. He had embraced every opportunity for imparting religious instruction. ¶ *With tears*. Expressive of his deep sympathy for them, and his strong yearning for their spiritual welfare.

32. *I commend you to God*. As the Father of your spirits, and your unchangeable friend. ¶ *And to the word of his grace*. Or, to his gracious word, namely, the gospel, which reveals his character and purposes. ¶ *Which is able to build you up*. A figure taken from the erection of edifices. The church is sometimes compared to a temple, Eph. ii. 20—22; 1 Pet. ii. 5. By this figure we are here to understand that the gospel has power to establish the church on a firm foundation, and to give it stability. ¶ *And to give you an inheritance*. To fit you to become partakers of spiritual blessings. To such blessings, Christians are often termed heirs, inasmuch as for them the Father hath prepared those blessings. ¶ *Sanctified*. Made holy. Either the saints made perfect in heaven, or those on earth in whom the purifying and sanctifying process has commenced. These latter are often termed holy, in comparison with the more depraved and sinful class.

33. *I have coveted no man's silver*, &c. His labors among them had not been prompted by a desire for pecuniary gain. He could say to them as, on another occasion, to the Corinthians, and could appeal to them in proof of his declaration, “I seek not yours, but

34 Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remem-

you." 2 Cor. xii. 14. ¶ *Apparel.* The ancients were accustomed to invest large sums of money in changes of raiment. See note on Matt. vi. 19.

34. *These hands have ministered, &c.* Instead of requiring the disciples to supply his temporal wants, as he might have done without the slightest injustice or impropriety, Paul had obtained his daily bread by his personal labor; perhaps as at Corinth, by assisting some tent-maker. See note on Acts xviii. 3. ¶ *And to them, &c.* Not only did Paul support himself by the labor of his hands, but he assisted to support his companions also. These facts he mentions, in proof that he had not been actuated by avarice, or a desire of pecuniary gain, in laboring among them, for the space of three years. Perhaps he had a design also to stimulate them to generosity, in a contribution for their poor brethren in Jerusalem, by thus reminding them of his gratuitous labors on their behalf. But it is certain from his epistles, that he did not intend to establish it as a perpetual rule in the church, that ministers of the gospel should receive no compensation for their labors; for he asserts and urges precisely the contrary. See 1 Cor. ix. 1—18.

35. *I have showed you all things.* I have fully instructed you, both by precept and example, concerning the doctrines which you should believe, and the Christian virtues which you should practise. ¶ *Ye ought to support the weak.* Some refer this to the weak in faith. But the more obvious meaning is probably the true one; namely, that the poor in this world's goods, the unfortunate, the depressed, the sick, and the afflicted, have claims upon their more wealthy brethren for at least a pittance from their abundance. Paul had given an example, that men should be willing to labor and practise self-denial, that they might impart somewhat for the relief of others still more weak or unfortunate than themselves.

ber the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and

¶ *The words of the Lord Jesus.* The language here quoted is not found in either of the Gospels. But it must be remembered, that the evangelists do not profess to have recorded every word uttered by our Lord. Indeed one of them, by a strong eastern hyperbole, intimates that a very inconsiderable portion of his history was thus recorded. See John xxi. 25. But much of his language was unquestionably treasured up in the minds of his disciples, and communicated from one to another as a precious memorial. One of his sayings, Paul repeats to his brethren, in a manner which indicates that they had heard it before, from him or some other disciple. ¶ *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* "Rather, more happy; because there may be more virtue in giving than there can be in receiving."

*Pearce.* "It is much happier to give than to receive. See to it, therefore, in that ministerial character which you bear, that you, above all others, be an example to the flock, of a generous and compassionate temper; and, instead of making yourselves burdensome, be as helpful to them as you possibly can both in their temporal and spiritual interests."—*Doddridge.* He who gives with a pure heart, for the relief of the miserable, enjoys a twofold happiness. He rejoices in the ability to give; and the consciousness that he has relieved human suffering, and that prayers and thanksgivings are ascending to God on his behalf from the hearts which have been cheered by his benevolence, afford unspeakable joy.

36. *Kneeled down.* The common and proper attitude of prayer. However the heart may rebel against kneeling before a fellow-man, the creature may well prostrate himself before the Creator, when confessing his sins and imploring pardon, or when supplicating his grace for any needful blessing. ¶ *Prayed with them all.* Being about to take as, he supposed, his final leave on earth of his brethren, he commended

fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

### CHAPTER XXI.

**A**ND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the

them to that God who was able to keep them from falling. When parting with friends for a season, and especially when parting with all, on leaving this world, how cheering is the thought, that those who are left behind are under the watchful care of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps, who numbers the hairs of their heads, and who will not leave them nor forsake them!

37. *Wept sore.* Literally, "there was much weeping of all." Or, as Tyndale has it, "they wept all abundantly." ¶ *Fell on Paul's neck, &c.* Embraced him, after the Eastern manner. They parted from him, in the most affectionate manner, as from a choice and dearly beloved friend.

38. *Sorrowing most of all, &c.* They sorrowed, in view of the perils against which the apostle had warned them. They sorrowed, on account of being deprived, for a season, of his counsels and his society. But most of all did they sorrow, in the belief that the parting was final, and that they would never again behold his face on earth. What better testimonial could be demanded or furnished of his faithfulness and kindness to them, than their manifestation of grief at his departure. Their hearts fully responded to his appeal, in the preceding verses; and they testified by actions, more expressive than any words, their entire confidence in his integrity, their gratitude for his kindness, and their love and veneration for him as a man and an apostle of Jesus Christ.

### CHAPTER XXI.

1. *Were gotten from them.* Had separated ourselves from the brethren, assembled at Miletus, who accompanied us to the ship. Acts xx. 38. ¶ *Coos.*

day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to

A small and very fertile island, near the south-west point of Asia Minor, celebrated for its beautiful fabrics of silk and cotton. It is now called *Stanco*. ¶ *Rhodes.* "An island and famous city of the Levant, the ancient name of which was Asteria, Ophiusa, and Etheria. Its modern name alludes to the great quantity and beauty of the roses that grew there. It is chiefly famous for its brazen Colossus, which was one hundred and five feet high, made by Chares, of Lyndus; it continued perfect only fifty-six years, being thrown down by an earthquake, under the reign of Ptolemy Energetes, king of Egypt, who began to reign B. C. 244."—*Ency. Rel. Knowl.* ¶ *Patara.* A seaport, on the main land, opposite Rhodes, on the southerly coast of Syria, in Asia Minor.

2. *Phenicia.* The westerly coast of the Holy Land, sometimes called Canaan. See note on Acts xi. 19.

3. *Cyprus.* See note on Acts iv. 36. ¶ *Syria.* A province of Asia, which comprehended not only Phœnicia, but the whole land of Israel. ¶ *Tyre.* See note on Matt. xi. 21.

4. *Finding disciples.* Tyre was a city in Phœnicia; and the gospel was preached in that region by some who were driven from Jerusalem by "the persecution that arose about Stephen." Acts xi. 19. ¶ *Who said to Paul, &c.* They were moved by the Spirit to admonish Paul that his journey to Jerusalem would be at the peril of his life. Yet he considered it his duty to proceed. The Spirit admonished him, that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city, Acts xx. 23; the admonition was now repeated, with special reference to Jerusalem; yet he faltered not, but went steadily forward, in imitation of our blessed Master. See Matt. xvi. 21.

Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed, and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the

evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did *prophesy*.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

5. *Accomplished those days.* When the seven days, ver. 4, were ended. ¶ *They all brought us on our way, &c* Such was the custom in the East, in regard to those whom the people would honor. Probably they also desired to be further instructed, and therefore kept company with Paul to the latest possible moment. ¶ *Kneeled down, &c.* See note on Acts xx. 36.

6. *Took ship.* Whether the same in which they sailed from Patara to Tyre, or not, does not appear. They depended on such conveyance as they could find, during this voyage from Ephesus to Syria. See ver. 2.

7. *Ptolemais.* A city on the easterly coast of the Mediterranean, southerly from Tyre, anciently called *Accho*. Judg. i. 31. It was called Ptolemais, in honor of one of the Egyptian Ptolemies. It received also the name of Acre, or St. John of Acre, from the crusaders, and was the last fortress in Palestine of which they retained possession. Being a very important military post, it has been the scene of many sanguinary struggles.

8. *Cesarea.* See note on Acts viii. 40. ¶ *Philip.* See note on Acts vi. 5. ¶ *Evangelist.* Messenger of glad tidings; a title peculiarly applicable to a preacher of the true gospel. Philip seems to have received commission to preach, as well as to perform the office

of deacon. See Acts viii. 5—40. ¶ *One of the seven.* That is, one of the seven deacons. Acts vi. 5.

9. *Which did prophesy.* Or, teach the doctrines of the gospel. The influence of the Spirit was given to females as well as to males. See Acts ii. 17, 18.

10. *Agabus.* See note on Acts xi. 28.

11. *Took Paul's girdle.* The loose, flowing garments of the Jews were confined by a girdle or belt around the waist. See note on Matt. iii. 4. ¶ *Bound his own hands and feet.* The prophets were accustomed to render their predictions more vivid and striking by such emblematic actions. See Isa. xx. 3, 4; Jer. xxvii. 2, 3. ¶ *Thus saith the Holy Ghost.* Agabus was moved by a divine impulse, and thus uttered his prediction as a revelation of the Spirit. ¶ *So shall the Jews, &c.* This prediction was literally fulfilled. Paul was bound by the Jews, and delivered to the Gentiles; being sent, as a prisoner, to Rome.

12. *Besought him not to go, &c.* It does not appear that the Spirit prohibited Paul from visiting Jerusalem; for, in such case, he would have been bound to obey unhesitatingly. But it was foreseen that the utmost personal hazard would attend his journey; and hence his friends earnestly besought him to abandon his purpose.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

13. *What mean ye, &c.* A mild rebuke to those who would turn him aside from what he regarded as the path of duty. It may be regarded also as an expostulation, that they should not unnecessarily excite his feelings, when he had need of all his firmness and resolution to encounter the trials which awaited him. He needed their encouragement, instead of their fearful apprehensions; their prayers, instead of their tears. ¶ *I am ready, &c.* This was not an ignorant and vain-glorious boast, like that of Peter, Mark xiv. 29—31. Peter knew not what he said; for he knew not the true nature of the trial. But Paul uttered his language advisedly. He knew the kind of persecution to which the prominent advocates of Christianity were exposed. He had assisted in the murder of Stephen. And, since his conversion, he himself had been scourged, imprisoned, and stoned. Yet, knowing the precise nature of the case, he felt himself prepared to go resolutely forward, and not only to be bound, but to die also, in the cause of his Master, if such were the divine will. His was the true spirit of a martyr. Never did this spirit desert him; but it enabled him to fight a good fight, and to obtain the crown. According to the uniform testimony of antiquity, he sealed his devotion to the gospel with his blood.

14. *Would not be persuaded.* Namely, to shrink from his duty, and abandon his journey to Jerusalem. ¶ *We ceased.* We refrained from urging him further. ¶ *The will of the Lord be done.* "When they saw he would not be persuaded, they committed him to God, who was able to preserve him. This resolution is the only means to bridle extravagant affections, when we can patiently submit ourselves, our desires, and counsels, to the will of God, in assurance of his mercy, who is able to make all things work together for

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Cesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17 And when we were come to

good to them that love him. Rom. viii. 28."—*Assemb. Annot.*

15. *After those days.* The "many days," mentioned in ver. 10, during which the transactions occurred which are narrated in ver. 11—14. ¶ *Took up our carriages.* "Rather, *we got all things ready*, that is, for our journey."—*Pearce.* "We made ourselves ready."—*Tyndale.* "Trussed up our fardels."—*Trapp.* "Took up our burdens."—*Bishops' Bible.* "Packing up our baggage."—*Haweis.* The meaning of the original is more accurately exhibited in either of the foregoing phrases than in the common translation. The English word *carriage* seems to have been occasionally used in the sense of baggage, or articles carried. It cannot be said, however, that such was a *customary* use of the word; but that it was regarded as susceptible of this meaning is evident from 1 Sam. xvii. 22, where *carriage* manifestly means *baggage*. And that such is its meaning in this place there can be very little doubt.

16. *Brought with them one Mnason, &c.* It is generally agreed, that *brought us to Mnason* would be a more correct translation. It is possible that this person was at Cesarea, and accompanied Paul to Jerusalem. But it is much more probable that those who went from Cesarea sought him out in Jerusalem, and obtained his consent that Paul should lodge at his house. ¶ *An old disciple.* He may have been aged. But the meaning of the original is, that he was a disciple of long standing, converted long ago, a disciple of old. Some have conjectured, not improbably, that he was converted under the ministry of our Lord himself. ¶ *With whom we should lodge.* Where we should reside, as our temporary home. See Acts x. 6.

17. *Received us gladly.* After so long an absence, during which they had

Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James: and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

labored so successfully, and had been preserved in so many perils, their safe return was an event which filled the hearts of their brethren with joy. And if, as is supposed, Paul carried with him the contributions of distant churches, to relieve the necessities of the "poor saints at Jerusalem," the joy and gratitude of their brethren would be so much the greater. Relief, in seasons of distress, is highly prized; and blessings are freely showered upon the heads of the happy persons who are the instruments of imparting it.

18. *James.* James the Less, called "the Lord's brother," Gal. i. 19, was the principal officer in the church at Jerusalem. James the Greater, the brother of John, had long before been slain with the sword. It is generally supposed that none of the other apostles, at this time, resided in that city. It was natural that Paul should seek a conference with this apostle, immediately after his arrival in Jerusalem. ¶ *All the elders were present.* A general assembly of the prominent men in the church is indicated. It is not unlikely that notice had been given that Paul would at that time relate what God had done by him.

19. *Saluted them.* Greeted them courteously and affectionately. ¶ *Declared particularly what things, &c.* Related in detail his successes in different regions, and the tokens of divine assistance he had enjoyed, in the exercise of miraculous powers, in the conversion of many to the faith, and in the preservation of his life when in extreme peril. The natural effect of this relation would be to confirm the confidence of the elders in his character as a genuine disciple and a faithful apostle, if it had in any degree been shaken by the false representations of his enemies.

20. *They glorified the Lord.* They gave thanks unto God for the manifestations of his favor to his chosen servant,

20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to

and for the spiritual blessings communicated through him to so many converts. See Acts xi. 18. ¶ *How many thousands.* On the day of Pentecost, three thousand were converted, Acts ii. 41; and within a few days afterwards, five thousand more were added to the number; or, at the least, the whole number amounted to five thousand, Acts iv. 4. And, notwithstanding the persecutions endured by the church during the succeeding quarter of a century, doubtless the number of believers had been much augmented. In Jerusalem and its vicinity, the faithful might be reckoned by thousands. ¶ *Zealous of the law.* In embracing Christianity, they had not abandoned the law of Moses, which they believed to be of divine authority. They were anxious even to impose its forms and ceremonies upon Gentile converts, Acts xv. 1. The apostles had solemnly adjudicated that question, and decided that the Gentiles were not bound to obey the ceremonial law, Acts xv. 23—29. But the question, whether the Jews, by embracing Christianity, were absolved from their obligation to practise the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, had not yet been decided. The Jewish Christians are understood to have carefully conformed to all the ancient customs, until the utter destruction of the temple and the dispersion of the people convinced them, that old things had passed away, and given place to a new and better dispensation. It has been suggested, that the apostles did not strive, in the outset, to change the customs of the Jewish converts, but only refused to impose the same yoke on the necks of the Gentiles, because they prophetically discerned the near approach of this remarkable event.

21. *They are informed, &c.* The reports concerning Paul, which had been circulated at Jerusalem, were in part false, and in part greatly exaggerated.



forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

It is manifest that James and the elders did not credit them, ver. 24. ¶ *To forsake Moses.* Or, more literally, to apostacy from Moses. To disregard the authority of the law. ¶ *Walk after the customs.* That is, conform to the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Mosaic code. Paul was reported to have thus taught "all the Jews which are among the Gentiles," or those dwelling in foreign lands. That he had taught the Gentiles that they were not bound by the ritual law of Moses, is very true; and, for so doing, he had not only his own apostolical authority, but that of the council of apostles and elders, assembled for the express purpose of determining this point, ver. 25, and Acts xv. 23—29. But he had not thus taught the Jews. He had cautioned them against relying on such observances for justification; and had assured them that he did not regard the whole code as absolutely binding, since the advent of the Messiah. But he had never objected to their observance of such portions of their ancient customs as they judged profitable. Indeed he had yielded to their prejudices, so far as to circumcise Timothy, Acts xvi. 3, and had now come up to Jerusalem to unite with his brethren in celebrating one of their great feasts. But, while he thus allowed Jewish converts to consult their own views of propriety in the matter of observing the rites and ceremonies prescribed by Moses, he firmly and resolutely protested against the imposition of this law upon the Gentiles, who had never been under its jurisdiction. This was the extent of his offence in this particular. Upon this foundation, by the usual process of enlargement, had been built the charge of inveterate hostility to Moses, and to all his laws and customs.

22. *What is it, therefore?* What is now to be done? How can this false impression be removed? ¶ *The multitude must needs come together.* They

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things whereof they were in-

will certainly assemble. Their minds are so excitable on this point, that they will meet, and there is danger of tumult; for they have heard and they believe these unfavorable rumors. The knowledge of your arrival will be the signal for a general outburst of popular feeling.

23. *Do therefore this, &c.* For the purpose of evincing a proper regard for Moses and his institutions. ¶ *We have four men.* Probably members of the church in Jerusalem. ¶ *Which have a vow on them.* Who have made a vow. See note on Acts xviii. 18. Such vows were common among the Jews; and it appears that the church in Jerusalem still observed the custom, not having yet been weaned from their attachment and devotion to the law of Moses. From the shaving of the head, ver. 24, it appears that the vow here mentioned was that of the Nazarite. See Numb. vi. 1—21. "It is usual for those that had been either afflicted with a distemper, or with any other distresses, to make vows; and, for thirty days before they are to offer their sacrifices, to abstain from wine, and to shave the hair of their head."—*Jos. War*, B. II. ch. xv. § 1. By uniting in such a service, Paul might show, that, whether or not he considered the law binding on him, he did not believe such conformity to be unlawful in a Jew.

24. *Them take.* Or, unite with them. ¶ *Purify thyself with them.* Observe the rule of abstinence from wine and from all legal or ceremonial defilement. ¶ *Be at charges, &c.* The sacrifice required to be offered, on the completion of a vow, were expensive; namely, a ram of a year old for a burnt-offering, a sheep for a sin-offering, a ram for a peace-offering, a basket of unleavened cakes, and a libation of wine, for each individual. "It seems to have been a custom among the Jews for the richer sort to bestow their charity upon the poorer sort for this purpose; for Jose-

formed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to

signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews, which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help. This is the man that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this

phus tells us, that Agrippa, upon his being advanced from a prison to a throne by the Emperor Claudius, came to Jerusalem; and there, among other instances of his religious thankfulness shown in the temple, he ordered very many Nazarites to be shaven; he (as I understand it) furnishing them with money for the expenses of that, and of the sacrifices necessarily attending it.—*Pearce*. ¶ *Shave their heads*. As this was the final ceremony, it is put for the completion of the vow. ¶ *All may know*, &c. By conformity in this manner, it would be manifest that Paul did not despise the law. ¶ *Walkest orderly*. To walk is frequently put for to *behave*, in the scriptures; and such is its meaning here. Such was the advice given to Paul, that he might satisfy the Jews that he was not an enemy to the law. He adopted it; but the experiment was unsuccessful.

25. *As touching the Gentiles*, &c. It is here allowed that, by a former decision of the highest earthly tribunal, Paul was fully justified in his resistance to all attempts to bring the Gentile Christians under bondage to the Jewish law. See Acts xv. 23—29. Nevertheless, as a Jew, naturally bound by the law, he might without impropriety conform to its requisitions, in any point not inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity.

26. *Took the men*. United with them. ¶ *Purifying himself with them*. That is, he commenced the observance of those ceremonies usual in the case of men who had made a vow. From what follows in ver. 27, it has been supposed that Paul himself made a vow for seven days, and accordingly kept

himself pure, in the manner prescribed by law. ¶ *To signify*, &c. “Declaring when the days of purification would be completed.”—*Howeis*. This is generally allowed to express the true meaning of the text. Paul announced to the priests that the period of their vow would expire in seven days, so that they might observe whether all the preliminaries were rightly performed, and be ready to offer the necessary sacrifices at the time appointed.

27. *The seven days were almost ended*. Literally, “As the seven days were about to be completed;” that is, as Paul was about to spend the seven days in the manner indicated in ver. 23—26. It would seem, from what follows, that he was seized on the first or second day after the commencement of the *seven*. He had been in Jerusalem two days at least, before he thus entered the temple, ver. 17, 18, 26; and eight more elapsed, after he was violently seized, before he declared to Felix, that it was only twelve days since he entered Jerusalem. Acts xxii. 30; xxiii. 12, 32; xxiv. 1, 11. We must understand, then, not that the seven days were *almost ended*, but that they were *about to be accomplished*; that is, about to be observed in the prescribed form. ¶ *The Jews, which were of Asia*. Foreign Jews, who had come up to the great feast, and who perhaps had heard Paul preach in the cities where they resided. James and the elders apprehended danger from the opposition of Jewish Christians, ver. 20—22; but the assault seems to have been made by the unbelieving Jews.

28. *Men of Israel, help*. A rallying cry to collect a mob. ¶ *This is the*

place: and further, brought Greeks also into the temple; and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city, Trophymus, an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple. And forthwith the doors were shut.

*man, &c.* It was known to the Jews, that Paul was an earnest advocate of Christianity; and they believed him to be a despiser of the law of Moses. Very possibly they may have received information that he was then in the city. However this be, they assembled suddenly, when called, ver. 30. ¶ *Against the people, &c.* "It is easy to see how the disinterested labors of the apostle, for the salvation of the Gentiles, had been tortured into these black charges; though he had not spoken against the people, unless it were for their bigotry and exclusiveness; nor against the law, except that it was not binding upon Gentile disciples, nor in itself of eternal obligation upon the Jews; nor against that place, except to teach that pure worship was acceptable to God, wherever offered, and that, for her sins, the holy city already tottered to her fall."—*Livermore.* ¶ *And hath polluted, &c.* That is, by introducing Gentiles into the temple. The Gentiles were prohibited from entering the holy place, on pain of death. Even proselytes might not go beyond the court allotted to them. To the mind of a Jew, scarcely any more high-handed crime was imaginable, than for one of the uncircumcised to pollute the holy place by entering it. Believing that Paul had been accessory to such desecration, they were exasperated to madness.

29. *Trophimus.* See Acts xx. 4. ¶ *They supposed.* They had seen this Gentile with Paul in Jerusalem; and they supposed he was with him in the temple. On this *supposition*, utterly false and unfounded as it was, they excited a universal uproar in the city, and would have committed murder, had they not been prevented by an armed force, ver. 31, 32. How much confu-

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar;

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them. And when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains:

sion and ill-blood might be avoided, if men would act according to what they *know*, instead of what they *suppose*! But many innocent are made to suffer, and many guilty become more guilty, continually, upon no better evidence than existed in this case.

30. *All the city was moved.* There was a universal tumult and commotion, under the impression that the holy place had been profaned. ¶ *The people ran together.* They assembled in haste at the temple. ¶ *Drew him out, &c.* That he might not further defile the temple by his presence, and that they might not defile it by his blood; for they manifestly intended to kill him, ver. 31; but, while willing to shed blood, the Jews had a sort of squeamishness in regard to certain times and places. See note on John xviii. 28.

31. *Went about to kill him.* It was manifestly their design to kill Paul, as Stephen had before been killed, without form of law, but by absolute violence. They waited only, that they might depart from consecrated ground. ¶ *Chief captain of the band.* That is, of the band of Roman soldiers, stationed in the castle near the temple, to preserve order in the city. See note on Matt. xxvii. 65. The name of this officer was Claudius Lysias. Acts xxiii. 26.

32. *Centurions.* Captains of hundreds. ¶ *They left beating of Paul.* They were endeavoring to destroy his life, by smiting with their fists and such weapons as were at hand, ver. 31. Their murderous design was happily arrested by military force. It was for the purpose of checking such outbursts of popular fury, that a band of Roman soldiers were stationed in the city.

33. *Bound with two chains.* Partly to satisfy the Jews that he should be kept securely for further examination,

and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers, for the violence of the people.

and partly because the chief captain supposed Paul to be a notorious transgressor, and desired to secure him for trial. In this was fulfilled the prediction of Agabus, ver. 11; for he was bound by means of the Jews, and was in the power of the Gentiles.

34. *Some cried one thing, &c.* In answer to the captain's inquiry, who Paul was and what he had done, a discordant cry was uttered, perfectly characteristic of a mob. Some shouted one thing, some another; each endeavoring to make himself heard amidst the tempest of voices. The natural consequence was, that the captain could obtain no satisfactory information. ¶ *The castle.* The castle, called Antonia, in honor of Mark Antony, was erected by John Hyrcanus, but beautified by Herod the Great. Josephus says it had four towers, one of which, seventy cubits in height, overlooked and commanded the temple. In this castle a strong military force was stationed, to repress the turbulence of the Jews, who were frequently engaged in insurrectionary attempts against the foreign domination which they so mortally hated.

35. *The stairs.* Namely, from the outer court of the temple to the castle, which stood in its immediate proximity. Josephus says, "The tower of Antonia was situated at the corner of two cloisters of the court of the temple, of that on the west, and that on the north. Where it joined to the two cloisters of the temple, it had passages down to them both," &c.—*Jew. War*, B. v. ch. v. § 8. ¶ *Borne of the soldiers.* Either raised from the stairs by the pressure, and so borne along in the tumult; or, perhaps more probably, partly lifted and forced forward by the soldiers, to escape the fury of the mob, who were pressing on them with violence.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art thou not that Egyptian which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the

36. *Away with him.* That is, to death. Destroy him. See Luke xxiii. 18; Acts xxii. 22.

37. *May I speak unto thee?* May I give you the information which you failed to obtain from the people, and state distinctly who I am, and what has caused this tumult? ¶ *Canst thou speak Greek?* The captain was surprised to hear Paul speaking the Greek language, as he supposed him to be an Egyptian, ver. 38. He himself appears to have been a Grecian, from his name Lysias: he manifestly was not a native Roman, because he declares that he purchased the right of citizenship, which was the birthright of Romans. Acts xxii. 28.

38. *Art thou not that Egyptian, &c.* Josephus describes an Egyptian Jew, who is supposed to be the same who is here mentioned. See *Antiq. B.* xx. ch. viii. § 6, and *Jew. War*, B. ii. ch. xiii. § 5. His account is substantially thus:—A person came from Egypt to Jerusalem, pretending to be a prophet; and prevailed on a multitude to accompany him through the wilderness, and finally to the Mount of Olives, from whence he assured them they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall at his command. He contemplated an attack upon the city, hoping to overpower the Roman guard. But Felix, with an army of horsemen and footmen, attacked and dispersed the motley multitude, slaying four hundred, and capturing two hundred men. The Egyptian impostor effected his escape, and "did not appear any more." This was a then recent event; and the captain imagined that Paul was the same person who had been the author of so much confusion. ¶ *Four thousand men.* Josephus says thirty thousand. Lardner reconciles the two by supposing the "four thousand" were from

wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake

Jerusalem, and that a sufficient number of desperadoes were obtained in the wilderness to make up "thirty thousand." Whether this supposition will abide the test of rigid examination or not, the ground taken by recent writers is unquestionably tenable; namely, Luke is as credible as Josephus; he is no more likely to be mistaken; and there is no more need of confirming or correcting his history by that of Josephus, than of confirming or correcting Josephus by Luke.

39. *A Jew of Tarsus.* A Jew born in Tarsus. See note on Acts xxii. 3. ¶ *Cilicia.* See note on Acts vi. 9. ¶ *No mean city.* Tarsus was the capital of the province, and was the rival of Athens and other distinguished cities for proficiency in the arts and sciences. With an excusable pride, Paul asserts the honor of his native city. ¶ *Speak unto the people.* He first requested only to explain to the captain his connection with the tumult, ver. 37; but, having made a favorable impression on him, he sought permission to address the people, desiring, as on all other favorable opportunities, to testify the grace of God, and to preach Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah.

40. *License.* Liberty; permission. ¶ *Beckoned, &c.* Made signs, to attract attention; a usual custom of Jewish orators, it would seem. See Acts xii. 17; xiii. 16; xix. 33. ¶ *A great silence.* They became very silent. A similar form of expression occurs in Matt. viii. 26. ¶ *Hebrew tongue.* The Syro-Chaldaic, the common language of the Jews in that age.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1. This chapter is arbitrarily separated from the preceding, of which it is

unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

## CHAPTER XXII.

**M**EN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

3 I am verily a man *which am* a

strictly a continuation. The only possible reason for the division was to avoid making a very long chapter. The whole work of dividing the scriptures into chapters and verses was performed by fallible men, and imperfections must be expected. Nevertheless, the division, even in its imperfect state, is attended with many conveniences. ¶ *Men, brethren, and fathers.* See note on Acts vii. 2. ¶ *My defence.* Or, apology. The manifest design of Paul was to defend himself against the charge of hostility to the law of Moses; including another purpose of which he never lost sight, namely, to proclaim the Messiahship of Jesus. He proceeded to declare himself a Jew, educated in the Jewish religion, and devoted to its interests and stability. He then related the miraculous events which resulted in his conversion to Christianity. Thus far, he said nothing peculiarly distasteful to the Jews, and they heard him in respectful silence. He then attempted to explain the reasons which induced him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. What he would have said, in explanation of his exertions to prevent the Gentiles from coming under the yoke of the law, which was the real cause of the Jewish enmity against him, we know not; for, as soon as he referred to his mission to the Gentiles, ver. 21, he was interrupted by violent outcries, and it was impossible for him to proceed further in his defence.

2. *Hebrew tongue.* See note on Acts xxi. 40. He used this language, rather than the Greek, as it was more familiar to his hearers.

3. *Tarsus.* This was the capital of Cilicia, situated "on the river Cydnus, about six miles from the sea; and, as Strabo says, was built by Sardanapalus, the king of Assyria. It is said once to

Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate

of the elders; from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

have equalled Athens and Alexandria in polite learning. Julius Cæsar bestowed on it the same privileges as Rome had; and hence Paul, from being born here, was *free-born*."—*Ency. Rel. Knowl.* Robinson suggests, that "the freedom of Tarsus was not equivalent to being a Roman citizen," inasmuch as the Roman captain, although he knew Paul to have been born in Tarsus, did not regard him as therefore a free citizen, but ordered him to be scourged, ver. 24, 29. He thinks it "probable, therefore, that the ancestors of Paul had obtained the privilege of Roman citizenship in some other way." But most critics are of the opinion, before quoted, that Tarsus was a free city, and that, by virtue of that freedom, all who were born there were free-born, and were accounted Roman citizens. See ver. 28. ¶ *In this city.* Jerusalem. ¶ *At the feet of Gamaliel.* See note on Acts v. 34. The idea is, that Paul was a pupil of Gamaliel. Some suppose the figure is taken from the relative position of teachers and pupils in Jewish schools; the former occupying a higher seat than the latter. From the fact that he was taught by one of their most distinguished Rabbins, the Jews might well suppose he was thoroughly trained in their religion. But he adds other particulars. ¶ *Perfect manner of the law, &c.* According to its most strict and rigid construction; or, as he elsewhere expresses it, "after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." Acts xxvi. 5. ¶ *Law of the fathers.* The law of Moses, by which the fathers were governed, and whose authority they revered. A man, thus instructed, could not be suspected of abandoning Juda-

ism, without sufficient cause. ¶ *Zealous toward God.* "With a blind zeal, which is no better than mettle in a blind horse, than fire on the chimney-top, than the devil in the demoniac, which threw him into the fire sometimes, and sometimes into the water."—*Trapp.* He had a flaming zeal for God and for his law, as he understood the matter. But it was a mistaken zeal: as he himself expresses it, it was "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Rom. x. 2. He happily compares it with the zeal of the Jews, saying, "I was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day." They were zealously endeavoring to kill him, for the honor of God and the law. In like manner he had persecuted disciples "unto the death," through the same kind of zeal, ver. 4. See also Acts xxvi. 9—11. While "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing," Gal. iv. 18, we shall do well to remember that zeal, even a zeal toward God, does not furnish conclusive evidence that we correctly apprehend his character or his purposes. Under the influence of such zeal, we may commit gross wickedness, as did Paul and the Jews. Let no man, therefore, too confidently presume he is right, merely because he feels very zealous.

4. *Persecuted this way, &c.* Or, this sect. See Acts viii. 1, 3; ix. 1, 2. In this manner he manifested his zeal.

5. *Doth bear me witness.* That is, the high priest knows the fact, and is a competent witness. Acts ix. 1, 2. ¶ *Estate of the elders.* The Sanhedrim is probably intended; in whose name the high priest issued letters, empowering Paul to imprison the disciples.

6—16. See notes on Acts ix. 3—18.

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

14. *See that Just One.* That is, Jesus in his glorified state. As Paul was appointed to the apostleship, it was necessary that he should have full assurance of the things which he was to proclaim; especially, that he should see the Lord Jesus, and thus have absolute knowledge of his resurrection from the dead. See 1 Cor. xv. 8.

16. *Why tarriest thou?* This exhortation to immediate action is not recorded in the narrative, chap. ix. But it is not to be supposed that every particular is mentioned by any historian, when describing great and important events. Prompt obedience is the duty of all disciples. The common proverb, "Never postpone until to-morrow what may be done to-day," is peculiarly applicable to Christians, who feel that they have a duty to perform in this world. To-morrow may not dawn upon our eyes. While it is called to-day, we should do whatsoever is required of us. ¶ *Wash away thy sins.* By baptism. It is not to be supposed that sins are washed away, like filth from the flesh, by water. But baptism is emblematical of that spiritual washing whereby the soul is effectually cleansed from sin. And when Christian disciples received baptism, they professed faith in that divine messenger who was

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly

commissioned to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. See note on Matt. iii. 11. *Calling on the name of the Lord.* Acknowledging thyself a disciple of Jesus. Griesbach reads "calling on his name." But the sense is not thus materially changed. The meaning of the exhortation seems to be, that Paul should openly profess himself a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and enter immediately upon the duty assigned him.

17. *When I was come again to Jerusalem.* After an interval of three years. See Gal. i. 17, 18; Acts ix. 26. ¶ *Prayed in the temple.* His praying in the temple, after the manner of the Jews, furnished presumptive evidence that he was not an enemy of Moses, of his religious institutions, or of the holy place. ¶ *I was in a trance.* Literally, ecstasy. See note on Acts x. 10.

18. *And saw him.* That is, Jesus. See note on Acts x. 11. Whether he actually saw the Lord with his bodily eyes, or whether the whole scene was mental, the effect on him was the same. Jesus had appeared unto him, and given him a command; and neither logic nor sophistry could persuade him that he had not seen a heavenly vision. ¶ *They will not receive, &c.* The Jews knew the power of Paul, while he labored to over-

out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned, and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

throw Christianity; and they feared him proportionably, when he became its advocate. Fearing him, they hated him also, as is not unfrequently the fact. They regarded him as an apostate, and would not willingly listen to him. Some have supposed it was also intended that his labors would not be profitable to the Jewish Christians; inasmuch as they entertained suspicions that he might be a secret enemy, and were not ready to adopt his opinions concerning the freedom of the Gentiles from the law of Moses. See Acts ix. 26; xv. 1—5.

19. *They know, &c.* "It is not certain from these words, whether Paul meant to object to the command, or to confirm the reasonableness of it."—*Pearce*. Some commentators suppose Paul intended to say he thought his labors among the Jewish Christians would be unprofitable, for the reasons assigned. The more usual opinion is, that he intended to suggest, that the Jews would the more attentively hear him, for the very reason that he had formerly been a zealot for their faith; and that they would be anxious to know what could have produced such a change in his mind. Either interpretation yields a good sense. ¶ *Beat in every synagogue*. See note on Matt. x. 17.

20. *Consenting unto his death, &c.* Acts vii. 58; viii. 1; xxvi. 10.

21. *Depart*. A repetition of the command, ver. 18. ¶ *Far hence unto the Gentiles*. To this work Paul was originally appointed, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. And almost the whole of his active ministry was devoted to its accomplishment. His travels were extensive, and he planted churches in distant lands, both in Asia and in Europe. For this

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain command-

service he was admirably qualified by the native energy of his mind and his thorough education, apart from the miraculous gifts bestowed upon him.

22. *Gave him audience*. Listened to him, with comparative patience. ¶ *Unto this word*. Namely, the word *Gentiles*. This at once roused their angry passions, which had been hushed in temporary slumber. He was about to give a reason for his conduct among the Gentiles, as he had already done for his conversion from Judaism to Christianity. But they would not hear a word of explanation. ¶ *Lifted up their voices*. Shouted loudly and tumultuously, in the manner of a mob. ¶ *Away with such a fellow, &c.* That is, put him to death. There is a striking similarity between this scene and that which was enacted in the same city, when Pilate was endeavoring to preserve the life of our Lord, Luke xxiii. 18—23.

23. *Cast off their clothes*. Threw aside their outer garments, perhaps intending to stone him at once. Or we may understand that they rent their garments, as a manifestation of rage, and their thirst for blood. ¶ *Threw dust into the air*. As an expression of extreme rage and indignation. "It is well known that in Asia, to this day, those who demand justice against a criminal repair in large bodies to the gate of the royal residence, where they make horrid cries, tearing their garments and throwing dust in the air."—*Horne*. By these significant acts, they indicated clearly what they would do, if they were not restrained by a sufficient military force.

24. *Castle*. See note on Acts xxi.

34. He been standing on the stairs leading up from the court of the temple



ed him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what

thou doest; for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free-born*.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew

into the castle. He was now taken into the fortress, partly to secure him from summary vengeance, and partly that the captain might examine him, to ascertain of what crime he had really been guilty, that should thus have excited the Jews to frenzy; for he seems not to have suspected that the whole uproar was without cause. ¶ *Examined by scourging.* A technical phrase, importing that he should be tortured until he would confess his crime. In barbarous nations, and indeed among the civilized, until a comparatively recent period, confessions have thus been extorted. The precise torture proposed in this case was scourging. In other cases, the rack, and fire, and water, and various other instruments of torture, have been used. "The whole practice has been one of the most flagrant violations of justice, and one of the foulest blots on human nature." ¶ *That he might know, &c.* Some suppose the captain or tribune did not understand the language in which Paul addressed the people. It is certain he did not understand what crime Paul had committed. This he desired to ascertain, presuming he must be an offender, from the excessive indignation of the Jews.

25. *Bound him with thongs.* When offenders were scourged, they were usually bound by straps or cords to an upright post, that the back might be more effectually exposed to the blows. It is a mortifying fact, that posts are yet standing in some portions of our land, which were formerly, if indeed they are not now, devoted to this barbarous practice. ¶ *Is it lawful, &c.* It was directly contrary to the law. This Paul knew; and his language

must be regarded as a caution to the officer, rather than as a question. He announced himself a Roman citizen, and suggested that none such were liable to scourging until convicted of some crime by which they should forfeit their privileges. See notes on Acts xvi. 37, 38.

26, 27. The appeal of Paul was not lost upon the officer, who immediately informed his superior; and, in the meantime, further proceedings were stayed.

28. *With a great sum, &c.* "Dion and Tacitus inform us, that, about the time of Claudius, the rights of a Roman citizen were bought with little money." *Whitby.* As in other cases of venality, probably a larger sum was demanded of some than of others. ¶ *I was free-born.* I have the privileges of Roman citizenship by birth. See note on ver. 3.

29. *Straightway.* Immediately. They were terrified at the crime which had so nearly been committed; for, though they acted under authority, they were not ignorant of the universal indignation which was excited against all who were instrumental in violating the privileges of a Roman citizen. ¶ *Should have examined him.* Were about to subject him to torture. See note on ver. 24. ¶ *Because he had bound him.* Not on account of having bound him with two chains, Acts xxi. 33; for it was lawful thus to bind a Roman, accused and not yet condemned; and it is manifest, from ver. 30, that these "bands" were kept upon him until the next day, though he was known to be a Roman citizen. But he was afraid of censure, and perhaps punishment, because he had prepared to inflict a disgraceful scourging, and had in fact subjected Paul to the indignity

that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

of being bound to the post. See note on Acts xvi. 38. In his terrible denunciation against Verres, Cicero refers to the sacred rights of person, among the Romans, and the enormity of the offence when those rights were violated: "Whoever he might be whom you were hurrying to the cross, were he even unknown to you, if he but said he was a Roman citizen, he would necessarily obtain from you, the prætor, by the simplest mention of Rome, if not an escape, yet at least a delay of punishment. It is a heinous sin to bind a Roman citizen; it is wickedness to beat him; it is next to parricide to kill him; and what shall I say, to crucify him!"

30. *Loosed him from his bands.* That is, from the chains which were placed upon him, Acts xxi. 33. It was not unlawful, it would seem, thus to secure a prisoner, though a Roman; for the chains were again replaced upon him. See Acts xxiv. 27; xxvi. 29. ¶ *All their council.* The Sanhedrim. He desired, through them, to ascertain, what he dared not attempt by scourging, of what crime Paul had really been guilty; for he seems still to have been unconscious that all the uproar had no substantial foundation.—¶ *Brought Paul down.* From the castle, which was highly elevated above the level on which the temple stood, and was approached by stairs. Acts xxi. 35, 40. ¶ *Set him before them.* Before the Sanhedrim, that they might investigate the charges against him, and hear his defence. This verse properly belongs to the succeeding chapter, and its separation is wholly arbitrary. See note on ver. 1.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

1. *Earnestly beholding the council.* Regarding them with fixed attention. Perhaps he scrutinized their counte-

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him, to smite him on the mouth.

nances, to see if any were then present who were members of that council when it gave him a commission to persecute the Christians. Acts xxvi. 12. Still stronger was his desire to ascertain, by the outward expression of their countenances, whether their hearts were full of bitterness against him, or whether he might hope for a fair trial. The scrutiny was discouraging, it would seem; for Paul did not enter upon his defence; but, by a justifiable policy, he caused them to disgorge their ill humor upon each other, instead of concentrating the whole upon his head. ¶ *Men and brethren.* A Hebrew idiom, equivalent to the more simple address, *brethren.* ¶ *In all good conscience before God,* &c. This declaration was characteristic of the great apostle to the Gentiles. It should be regarded as an assertion of honesty of purpose and faithfulness in action, but not of perfect holiness or freedom from sin. A man who is in the wrong, and in fact a violator of the divine law, may be as conscientious and zealous as he who is in the right. See note on Acts xxii. 3. The idea he intended to convey was this: Whatever I have considered to be right, I have done. I have followed my convictions of duty. I have been guided by the dictates of my conscience; what that has forbidden I have avoided, and what it has required I have performed. This has been my uniform practice through life. I once believed "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," Acts xxvi. 9; and you will bear me witness that I did that work not negligently. Since my conversion, I have regarded it as my duty to build up that which I once endeavored to destroy; and I have been as conscientious in the latter case as in the former. This was bold language for a man to utter in the hearing of those who were seek-

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest

me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by, said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

ing his life. But it was strictly true. And the directness of his appeal indicates the perfect sincerity of his heart.

2. *The high priest Ananias.* This person is generally understood to have been son of Nebedæus. He had formerly been high priest; but, as it appears from Josephus, he had been sent prisoner to Rome, and deposed. He had been permitted to return, but was not reinstated. His successor in the high-priesthood, after enjoying the dignity for a time, was slain in the temple, at the instigation, as was supposed, of Felix, the Roman governor. The office then remained vacant for a time; and, in this interval, the event here recorded is supposed to have taken place. The office of high priest being vacant, Ananias, the last person living who had filled it, being present, was naturally invited to officiate for that occasion. Such is the opinion entertained by many commentators concerning this Ananias. Nevertheless, it is not to be disguised, that others doubt the correctness of this opinion, and that the identity of the individual is somewhat uncertain. ¶ *To smite him on the mouth.* A barbarous indignity, not unusual among the Jews. See John xviii. 22. The high priest could not endure Paul's protestation of conscious honesty, in his whole conduct. He regarded him as an apostate, in whom nothing of goodness could remain. Perhaps also he took offence at the firm and noble bearing of Paul, who did not cringe, or fawn, or deprecate the anger of his judges; but boldly asserted his innocence, and exhibited the undaunted countenance of an honest man.

3. *God shall smite thee.* God shall punish thee. The phraseology has reference to the act which Ananias had commanded to be performed. This is not to be understood as an imprecation, but rather as a prediction, which was not long afterwards fulfilled, when, upon an attack by certain seditious persons under Menahem, the citizens were defeated, and Ananias slain, being dragged out of an aqueduct, in which he had attempted to conceal himself. See Josephus, *Jew. War*, B. II. ch. xvii.

§ 8, 9. Paul was not in the habit of shrinking from danger. He would fearlessly assert his rights, and bear testimony to the truth, at all hazards. Possibly there may have been somewhat of indignation mingled with his boldness on this occasion. It is not inconsistent with the Christian character to protest against injuries and indignities, in a firm and resolute manner. See John xviii. 23. ¶ *Thou whited wall.* "The great men among the Jews were used to wear a white robe, and probably Ananias was then clothed in such a garment; but his inside was full of injustice, as his behavior in Paul's case showed. Hence he is here compared to one of the Jewish sepulchres, the walls of which were on the outside whited for ornament, while in the inside they contained nothing but the rottenness and filthiness of dead carcasses. See Matt. xxiii. 27."—*Pearce*. This is a figure, strikingly descriptive of a hypocrite, who is not what he seems to be: outwardly, he has a fair appearance; but inwardly, he is full of corruption and iniquity. *Thou whited wall*, therefore, may be considered equivalent to *thou hypocrite*. Probably Paul chiefly refers to this expression, in ver. 5, as having been uttered hastily, and with too much warmth. ¶ *To judge me after the law.* Or, according to the law. A judge is solemnly bound to observe the rules of the law, which he applies in judging others. Especially is he bound to do this while actually engaged in the functions of his office. By sitting in judgment on Paul, Ananias confessed the authority of the law which he was administering, and was bound to obey it. ¶ *Smitten contrary to the law.* None but a hypocrite would violate the law he professed to uphold. None but a man of ungovernable passions would be guilty of the gross outrage committed by Ananias. And Paul placed his conduct in such a light that its true character was manifest. See Lev. xix. 35; Deut. xxv. 1.

4. *Revilest thou God's high priest?* Dost thou reproach him who sustains such a sacred character? If the supposition be true, that Ananias was not

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 But when Paul perceived that

the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

the actual high priest, but only acting in that capacity for the occasion (note on ver. 2), it was improper to claim for him that sacredness of character which was supposed to belong to the Lord's anointed. But the Jews were not remarkable for nice distinctions, especially when angry.

5. *I wist not, &c.* I knew not; I was ignorant that he was the high priest. Various interpretations have been given of this language. Some say it is ironical, meaning, I did not suppose that any one could be the high priest who would offer such an indignity to a prisoner; others, that Paul intended to say, he had forgotten for the moment that Ananias was high priest, and that he regretted his hasty and unadvised language; others, that, having been long absent from Jerusalem, Paul really did not know who was high priest, and that he intended here to excuse his language on the plea of actual ignorance. These and other interpretations have been given. But I prefer that which is given by Barnes, as the most plain and sensible which I have seen, and attended with the fewest difficulties: — "The true interpretation, therefore, I suppose is that which is derived from the fact that Ananias was not then properly the high priest; that there was a vacancy in the office; and that he presided by courtesy, or in virtue of having been formerly invested with that office. The meaning then will be, I did not regard or acknowledge him as the high priest. I did not address him as such, since that is not his true character. Had he been truly the high priest, even if he had been guilty of manifest injustice, I would not have used the language which I did. The office, if not the man, would have claimed respect. But as he is not truly and properly clothed with that office, and as he was guilty of manifest injustice, I did not believe that he was to be shielded in his injustice by the law which commands me to show respect to the proper ruler of the people."

¶ *For it is written.* See Exod. xxii. 28. He would have been more guarded in his language, had he considered Ananias to be the actual ecclesiastical ruler of the people; for he had no intention to violate the law. He would have refrained from openly denouncing him as a hypocrite, ver. 3. This may have been designed as an apology for the offensive terms which he had uttered, or it may have been intended as a justification.

6. *When Paul perceived.* Though he had been absent from Jerusalem several years, yet he probably recognized many of his former acquaintances in the Sanhedrim, and remembered some of them as Pharisees, and some as Sadducees. ¶ *He cried out, &c.* He was confident, from the spirit manifested by Ananias and the council, that he could not expect a fair trial, or a patient hearing. If they would not permit him to assert his honesty and conscientiousness, he could not expect they would allow him to prove that fact, by a declaration of all the circumstances connected with his case. It was important to convince the Roman officer that he was innocent. Paul therefore judged it justifiable to make a declaration, true in itself, which he knew would at once reveal the true character of the Jews to the Roman, and convince him that their anger did not necessarily imply any illegal act in the person denounced. ¶ *I am a Pharisee, &c.* Of course, he did not intend to assert himself to be a Pharisee, in all respects; for he was known to have adopted the Christian faith, and stood ready to acknowledge and justify it before all men. But he meant, that, on the great point in controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees, he as fully concurred with the Pharisees, since his conversion, as he did when sitting at the feet of Gamaliel. ¶ *Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, &c.* A Hebrew idiom, equivalent to "the hope of the resurrection of the dead." This hope the Pharisees cherished.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the Scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove,

The labors of Paul tended to confirm this hope; for at the very foundation of the doctrine he preached, was the great fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead; and thus a resurrection from the dead was demonstrated. See 1 Cor. xv. 1—22. For preaching this doctrine, which confirmed the truth contended for by the Pharisees, he had been opposed, and persecuted, and finally brought to that tribunal. So that it was strictly true, as he alleged, that he was called in question on account of that hope.

7. *There arose a dissension.* The result was precisely such as he anticipated. The council could not restrain their contentious feelings. The Pharisees were willing to sustain Paul, for the sake of gaining an advantage against the Sadducees; who, in their turn, were even more violently incensed against him for thus aiding their adversaries.

8. *Sadducees — Pharisees.* For an account of these sects, see note on Matt. iii. 7. See also Matt. xxii. 23—33, and notes. ¶ *Confess both.* Namely, the resurrection of the dead, and the existence of spirits separate from mortal bodies. Both these doctrines were confessed or believed by the Pharisees, and rejected by the Sadducees.

9. *There arose a great cry.* A great clamor ensued, and the council became a scene of uproar and confusion. ¶ *Arose and strove.* The violence of the controversy is graphically portrayed. If blows were not actually given and received, it seems certain that the chief captain anticipated such a result of the quarrel; for he caused his prisoner to be removed, "lest he should have been pulled in pieces by them," ver. 10. ¶ *We find no evil, &c.* Nothing contrary to the Mosaic law. For the sake of his testimony against the Sadducees,

saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

the Pharisees were willing to overlook all which they had before condemned, and to sustain him as an innocent man. If they were in the slightest degree honest in their present declaration of approval, it must be regarded as a confession that their former objections were founded on prejudice alone. ¶ *If a spirit or an angel, &c.* Referring to Paul's account of his conversion and his vision in the temple. Acts xxii. 6—11, 17—21. Perceiving that these circumstances could be urged to the discomfiture of their adversaries, the Pharisees professed to give full credit to what they had execrated on the preceding day. Their hatred of the Sadducees was so violent, that they were ready to seize on any advantage against them. Hence they were willing to forego their desire to destroy Paul, for the sake of using his testimony against an enemy more hated because more powerful and more feared. An instance of Pharisaical cunning, in this case, should not be overlooked. They speak of Paul's having seen an *angel* or *spirit*. He said he had seen *Jesus*. By this perversion of his language, they could urge what he had seen, as an evidence of the existence of angels and spirits, without committing themselves on the great question at issue between him and them. They quoted him in favor of their own doctrine, but reserved the right to oppose him, as before, in regard to the Messiahship of Jesus. ¶ *Let us not fight against God.* Let us not resist the divine testimony. The Greek word, of which this entire phrase is the translation, is omitted by Griesbach.

10. *A great dissension.* The controversy, as is usual in such cases, became more and more furious, until personal violence was offered, or manifestly threatened. ¶ *Take him by force, &c.*

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

The interposition of military force was necessary to secure him from harm at the hands of those who professed to be the conservators of religion and good morals.

11. *The Lord stood.* Namely, Jesus Christ. See note on Acts xxii. 17, 18. ¶ *Be of good cheer.* This was at once an approval of his conduct, and an encouragement to perseverance and steadfastness in the midst of trials and dangers which so rapidly multiplied. ¶ *Bear witness also at Rome.* This was a direct assurance that he should be delivered from the present peril, and also that his long-cherished desire of preaching the gospel in Rome should be gratified. Rom. i. 9—16.

12. *Certain of the Jews.* More than forty in number, ver. 13. ¶ *Banded together.* Associated; formed a conspiracy. ¶ *Bound themselves under a curse, &c.* Literally, *anathematized themselves*, or imprecated a curse upon their heads, if they should eat or drink before they had killed Paul. Such a vow, though sinful, and indicative of the blackest moral corruption, was not so dangerous to bodily health and comfort as it might seem; for there were then, as in more recent times, those who claimed authority to absolve men from the obligation of oaths and vows, however solemn or awful. "What will become of these anathematized persons if their curse should be upon them, and they cannot reach to murder Paul? (as indeed it happened they could not;) must not these wretches helplessly die with hunger? Alas! they need not be very solicitous about that matter; they have their casuist Rabbins, that can easily release them of that vow: 'He that hath made a vow not to eat any

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he

thing, woe to him if he eat; and woe to him if he do not eat. If he eat, he sinneth against his vow; if he do not eat, he sinneth against his life. What must such a man do in this sense? Let him go to the wise men, and they will loose his vow; according as it is written, The tongue of the wise is health.' (Hieros. Avodah Zarah.) It is no wonder, if they were prodigal and monstrous in their vows, when they could be so easily absolved."—*Lightfoot.*

13. *This conspiracy.* Namely, for Paul's destruction. The large number engaged rendered it formidable, and promised success, if they could bring Paul within their reach; but it was impracticable to injure him while in the castle. The plan of action is detailed in ver. 15.

14. *Bound ourselves under a great curse.* Literally, *anathematized ourselves* with an anathema.

15. *Ye with the council.* With the Sanhedrim. They could not expect the chief captain would again expose Paul to peril, unless at the request of the whole council. It is manifest, from this expression, that application was made directly, not to the whole council, but only a part; probably Sadducees, as the Pharisees had manifested a determination to defend and sustain the apostle as an important witness against their rival sect. ¶ *Or ever he come near, &c.* Before he comes near. The plan was to assassinate him as he passed through the court between the castle and the apartment of the temple in which the Sanhedrim held its session; so that the council need not be suspected of being privy to the design.

went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they

16. *Paul's sister's son*. Nothing is known of this person beyond what is here recorded. ¶ *Entered into the castle*. Although a prisoner, Paul was allowed the privilege of seeing his friends in private; an indulgence not always granted to prisoners.

17. *One of the centurions*. Probably the officer of the guard then on duty. Though Paul had been assured of preservation, he had no doubt that proper means were necessary. He would not tempt God, by unnecessarily encountering danger. See note on Matt. iv. 5—7. Compare also Acts xxvii. 22—25, 31.

18, 19. These verses furnish a good specimen of the minuteness of ancient narratives.

20, 21. See notes on ver. 12—15. ¶ *A promise from thee*. That is, a promise or consent to place Paul again before the council.

22. *See thou tell no man*, &c. The success of the contemplated scheme depended much upon its secrecy. Had the Jews known that the chief captain was acquainted with their conspiracy, they would have been on the alert to counteract his efforts to defeat it.

23. *Two hundred soldiers*. Infantry, or foot-soldiers. ¶ *Horsemen*. Cavalry; soldiers serving on horseback. ¶ *Spear-men*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide *them* beasts, that

Etymologically, it signifies, those taking or grasping by the right hand. Its signification here is somewhat doubtful; but it is generally supposed to indicate soldiers armed with spears or javelins, which they were accustomed to grasp and hurl with the right hand. *Spear-men* expresses this idea with sufficient accuracy. A body of four hundred and seventy soldiers was thus appointed to escort Paul from Jerusalem; a body sufficiently strong to protect him against any sudden outbreak on the part of the people; and as the plan was concerted secretly, ver. 22, no organized assault was to be apprehended. ¶ *Third hour of the night*. Nine o'clock in the evening. The night, like the day, was divided into twelve hours, reckoning from sunset to sunrise. See note on John i. 89. The night season was chosen for the departure of Paul, the more effectually to elude his adversaries, and avoid a tumult and affray, which would probably result in the destruction of life.

24. *Beasts*. The original word is of a general character, and may mean horses, or camels, or asses. The latter were generally used in Judea. ¶ *Felix the governor*. The Roman governor of Judea, whose residence was at Cesarea, about sixty miles from Jerusalem. See note on Acts viii. 40. The character of this ruler is described by his

they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner :

26 Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent governor Felix, *sendeth greeting.*

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them : then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council :

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me how

contemporaries in a very unfavorable light. He exercised his authority in such an arbitrary manner, that, when he was recalled to Rome, A.D. 60, he was followed by the Jews, who accused him before the emperor; and he escaped only by the intercession of powerful friends at court. In his private character, he was equally faulty. He lived in an adulterous connection with Drusilla, sister to king Agrippa. See note on Acts xxiv. 24.

26. *Claudius Lysias.* Such was the name of the chief captain. ¶ *Most excellent.* A title of office. The same word is rendered "most noble," Acts xxiv. 3, and applied to the same individual. ¶ *Greeting.* A customary form of address, importing a desire for one's health, happiness, and prosperity. See note on Acts xv. 23.

27. *Should have been killed of them.* Was in danger of being killed by them. They designed to kill him. ¶ *With an army.* Or, a band; a military force. ¶ *Rescued him.* He had twice preserved Paul's life, ver. 10, and Acts xxi. 32.

28. See Acts xxii. 30.

29. *Questions of their law.* The chief captain understood this to be a controversy concerning the proper interpretation of the Mosaic law. And to such a conclusion, it was natural that a heathen should come. See Acts xviii. 15. ¶ *Worthy of death.* De-

that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle :

33 Who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of Cilicia ;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And

serving death; that is, by the Roman law, which was the only law regarded by the chief captain. ¶ *Bonds.* Chains or confinement.

30. See ver. 20—24.

31. *Antipatris.* A town anciently called Cafar-Saba, about twenty-five miles from Cesarea, and about thirty-five from Jerusalem. "Herod the Great changed its name to Antipatris, in honor of his father Antipater. Antipatris was situated in a very fruitful and agreeable plain, watered with many fine springs and rivulets, and near the mountains, in the way from Jerusalem to Cesarea."—*Calmet.* This was a long journey to accomplish in one night; but it was a forced march, and the Roman soldiers were renowned for their powers of endurance.

32. *Left the horsemen.* The four hundred foot-soldiers returned to Jerusalem. All danger of surprise and attack was past. The horsemen alone were a sufficient escort, during the remainder of the journey to Cesarea.

34. *Of what province he was.* That he might know whether the case was within his jurisdiction. Roman governors were cautious in this respect. See Luke xxiii. 7. ¶ *Cilicia.* Tarsus was in this province. See note on Acts xxii. 3.

35. *Herod's judgment-hall.* Literally, in Herod's pretorium. See notes



he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**A**ND after five days, Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, say-

on Mark xv. 16; John xviii. 28. This name was originally applied to the tent of the prætor, in which that officer administered justice; and hence it was easily and naturally transferred to another place, devoted to a similar purpose. The place supposed to be here indicated was the palace erected at Cesarea by Herod the Great, and occupied by succeeding governors or procurators. It was not unusual to construct prisons, or strong apartments, in ancient palaces, where prisoners might be safely kept. Here Paul remained in confinement, more or less strict, for more than two years, Acts xxiv. 27; at the end of which period, Felix was succeeded by Festus, a more just and upright magistrate.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1. *After five days.* Namely, from the time when Paul was sent from Jerusalem to Cesarea. This was twelve days after his entrance into Jerusalem, ver. 11. The Jewish rulers had learned, probably by notification from the chief captain, ver. 8, that Paul was in the custody of the governor, awaiting trial; and they took prompt measures to have an accusation presented. ¶ *Descended.* From Jerusalem to Cesarea. ¶ *Orator, named Tertullus.* A public advocate or pleader. The name is Roman; and it is generally supposed that the orator was a Roman, employed by his Jewish clients on account of his skill in the laws and legal forms of the empire. But, in ver. 6, he speaks like a Jew; and, unless we understand him to personate his clients more fully than would be consistent with Roman pride and the contempt with which the Jewish race was viewed, we should rather con-

ing, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee, that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 For we have found this man a

clude him to be a Jew, who had adopted a Roman name, as Paul himself had done. See note on Acts xiii. 9.

2. *Called forth.* Brought from prison, and placed at the tribunal of Felix. ¶ *We enjoy great quietness.* Or public tranquillity. This exordium, according to a custom of orators, not yet entirely fallen into disuse, was designed to make a favorable impression on the judge, by praising his administration of the government. The obsequiousness of the language is far different from the courteous but dignified introduction of Paul's discourse, ver. 10. ¶ *Very worthy deeds.* Acts pleasing to the people, and productive of the public welfare. This was sheer flattery. True it was, to be sure, that Felix had performed military services beneficial to the people, had quelled certain insurrections, and driven out certain bands of robbers, who had been very troublesome. Yet the people hated him for his tyrannical conduct, and accused him before the Roman Emperor. See note on Acts xxiii. 24. ¶ *Providence.* Vigilance, or prudence.

3. *We accept it always, &c.* We are thankful, grateful to you, as the author of many blessings to our nation. And we are free to express our thankfulness, not only now and in your presence, but at all times and in all places. ¶ *Most noble.* A title of office, like that of Honorable or Excellency, now in use. See Acts xxiii. 26; xxvi. 25.

4. *Be not further tedious, &c.* Lest I weary your patience, by spending more time in commendation.

5. *A pestilent fellow.* Literally, *a pestilence.* "Meaning that he was a plague to society. The substantive expresses something more than the adjective would have done; not only a pes-

pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law:

7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,

ilent man, but a pestilence himself; as in that of Martial, xi. 93: Thou art not a vicious man, O Zoilus, but vice itself."—Pearce. ¶ *A mover of sedition.* All the tumults which had been excited against him, of course were charged upon him. That he had been the occasion of tumults is true, and his life had been in frequent peril; but he had never excited a tumult, since his conversion. This charge was artfully made; for sedition was regarded by the Romans as one of the most inexcusable crimes, and severe punishments were inflicted for this offence. ¶ *Ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes.* A name of reproach given to Christians; as the followers of a Nazarene, namely, of Jesus of Nazareth. Without intending it, Tertullus acknowledged the faithfulness and energy of the apostle, as one of the most active propagators of the Christian faith. Why he should suppose that Christianity was more objectionable to the Romans than Judaism, does not appear; for they despised both.

6. *Gone about.* Attempted, or endeavored. ¶ *To profane the temple.* Alluding, doubtless, to the false charge of the Jews, Acts xxi. 28, that he had introduced Greeks into the temple. ¶ *Would have judged according to our law.* This was unqualifiedly false. The Jews had attempted to judge Paul, in the sense of *condemning* or *punishing*, but without even the form of law. As to a fair trial and adjudication of his case, upon the settled principles of the Mosaic law, it did not once enter their hearts, so far as we may judge from the history.

7. *With great violence, &c.* With irresistible force. The pretence was, that, if Lysias had not interfered, they

8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him.

9 And the Jews also assented, saying, That these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do

would have settled the case equitably and righteously, without giving any trouble to Felix. The truth was, that, on two several occasions, Acts xxi. 31; xxiii. 12—15 (to say nothing of the sudden and unpremeditated tumult in the temple, Acts xxiii. 10), they would have murdered him, without form of law, had he not been protected from their fury by the chief captain.

8. *Commanding his accusers, &c.* See note on ver. 1. ¶ *By examining, &c.* In the preceding verses, we have a summary of what Tertullus alleged against Paul. He also offered witnesses in support of his several allegations.

9. *The Jews also assented, &c.* They were swift witnesses, ready to confirm every charge, and to vouch for its literal truth. Whether they testified singly or by acclamation, is of little consequence. They were highly excited and thoroughly trained, and were doubtless ready to testify in the most effectual manner. Men who were willing to imbrue their hands in the blood of their victim would not be very scrupulous about the truth, in attempting to procure his condemnation by the governor.

10. *Had beckoned unto him.* Given a sign with his hand, or perhaps by an inclination of his head. ¶ *Of many years.* Felix had exercised the office of procurator about five years, which was a long time, or many years, in that period of frequent changes. But Paul had reference chiefly to the fact, that Felix had been in that office sufficiently long to become acquainted with the laws and customs of the Jews. The address of Paul was courteous, and by implication complimentary to Felix; but, instead of flattering the governor by praising his former actions, he con-

the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any

man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my

gratulated himself that he was permitted to make his defence before one who was qualified to judge accurately. His exordium, therefore, is characterized by conscious innocence and straightforward honesty, instead of the fawning sycophancy which was exhibited by Tertullus, ver. 2. ¶ *A judge unto this nation.* A magistrate, or ruler, commissioned to administer justice in a judicial capacity, as well as to exercise a general civil and military authority over the province. ¶ *The more cheerfully answer*, &c. He was so confident of his innocence and conformity to law, that he rejoiced to know that his judge so well understood that law.

11. *Because that.* These words may better be omitted. There is nothing answering to them in the original; and they serve only to connect this verse with the preceding, more closely than the sense properly admits. Paul did not intend to say there was any connection between the governor's general knowledge of the Jewish law, and his ability to know how long the accused had been in Jerusalem; but only that his general knowledge enabled him to judge more accurately of the whole transaction, after hearing the testimony and arguments. ¶ *Thou mayest understand.* Thou mayest ascertain, by the examination of witnesses, what I assert to be a fact. ¶ *There are yet but twelve days since*, &c. Some commentators explain this to mean that twelve days elapsed between Paul's arrival at Jerusalem and his committal to the custody of Felix at Cæsarea. The only apparent object in such an interpretation is to give as nearly seven days as possible for the accomplishment of Paul's vow, Acts xxi. 27. But, in the note upon that place, it has been suggested that he did not spend any considerable portion of seven days in that service, but was only about to perform the prescribed ceremonies. This being the case, there is

no necessity to interpret the phrase "there are yet but twelve days," in any other than its most obvious and natural sense. A more exact translation of the original would be "There are not more than twelve days since," &c.; or, as Haweis translates, in more familiar language, "it is not more than twelve days ago since," &c. The manifest import of the declaration is, that Paul's defence before Felix was not more than twelve days subsequent to his arrival in Jerusalem. The shortness of this period he urges, to show the improbability of the charge that he had excited sedition in Jerusalem. He was there only about one week; and more than two days of that time, he was in the custody of the chief captain. See Acts xxi. 33; xxii. 30; xxiii. 11, 12, 23. ¶ *To worship.* More literally, *worshipping*, or as a worshipper. This was one object, but not the only one, of the apostle's visit to Jerusalem. See ver. 17.

12. *They neither found me*, &c. The general charge, that he was a *pest*, or a plague of society, he passes over as unworthy of notice. But to the specification that he was a "mover of sedition," he replies, in ver. 11, that it is improbable, and here opposes an absolute and unqualified denial; declaring that he was not found, in a single instance, in any place whatever, engaged in any seditious act. His conduct in the temple and in the city had been quiet and peaceable.

13. *Neither can they prove the things*, &c. Namely, that he had been a "mover of sedition," or guilty of any seditious act whatever. He boldly asserted his innocence, and challenged proof to the contrary.

14. *But this I confess*, &c. The second specification of the general charge against him was, that he was "a ring leader of the sect of the Nazarens." Bating the offensive terms, he acknowledged the truth of the allegation.

fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

15 And have hope toward God,

Paul was not accustomed to shrink from an avowal of his faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah. He freely confessed his faith, in presence of an infuriated mob in Jerusalem and elsewhere; and he would not disguise it, in presence of the Roman governor, when sheltered by the laws of the Roman empire. ¶ *After the way.* In the manner. ¶ *Which they call heresy.* Namely, in ver. 5, where the same word is translated *sect*. By changing the word, our translators have weakened the force of the passage. The same translation should unquestionably have been given in both places. The original denotes simply a division or schism. "We have attached to the word *heresy* an idea which is not conveyed by the Greek word, and now commonly understand by it, *error of doctrine*. In Paul's answer here, there is an explicit reference to their charge, which does not appear in our version. The charge of Tertullus was, that he was the ringleader of the *sect* of the Nazarenes, ver. 5. To this Paul replies, 'After the way which they call *sect* (not *error of doctrine*, but after a way which they maintain is producing *division* or *schism*), so worship I the God of my fathers. Paul was not ashamed to be called a follower of that *sect* or *party* among the Jewish people. Nor should we be ashamed to worship God in a mode that is called *heresy* or *schism*, if we do it in obedience to conscience and to God.'—*Barnes*. ¶ *So worship, &c.* I continue to worship the God of my fathers, the same God who has for ages been worshipped by the children of Israel. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, is the same God whom I worship. I belong to a *sect*, it is true: nevertheless I have not forsaken my fathers' God. The Jews were tolerated by the Roman government, in the worship of their God. Paul claimed protection in the worship of the same God. He had not violated the laws of the empire, by introducing a new deity, as an object of worship, without permission. He continued to worship that One God who had been revered for ages by the

which they themselves also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Jews. ¶ *Believing all things, &c.* Not only did he continue to worship the God of his fathers, but he held fast his faith in the law and the prophets. See note on Matt. v. 17. He continued to believe all which Moses and the prophets wrote. The difference between him and the Jews was, that he understood more fully than they did, the things which were written, especially concerning the Messiah. He had not, in fact, renounced the ancient faith; he had only advanced to a new degree of faith, resting on the evidence of the law and the prophets, and the natural result of what was therein predicted. In truth, almost all his arguments with the Jews were founded on the testimony of their own sacred writings. The common phrase, by which his labors on this subject are described, is, "he reasoned with them out of the scriptures."

15. *And have hope toward God, &c.* He had a hope for the resurrection of the dead, founded on the divine promises. His hope was in God; it rested on the faithfulness of God. It is observable, that Paul did not say he *believed* or *feared* there would be a resurrection of the dead; but that he *hoped* for it. His views of the resurrection and its consequences were such, that a hope was inspired in its reality. He did not shudder at the prospect, or view it with indifference. But with a spirit of *hope*, which is a combination of desire and expectation, he anticipated the fulfilment of the promise concerning a resurrection. ¶ *Which they themselves also allow.* Namely, which one powerful portion or sect of the Jews, the Pharisees, believe. There is no substantial difference between us on this point. There was truly a difference between Paul and the Pharisees, in their method of proving the doctrine of the resurrection. He urged, powerfully and effectually, a class of proofs more direct and conclusive in their character than any which they could offer. Moreover, there was a difference between the vague ideas which they entertained of a future existence, and the more clear, distinct, and definite ideas

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

17 Now, after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the tem-

ple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult :

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me.

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council,

which he had learned from the Master. Compare notes on Matt. iii. 7; Luke xx. 36. But, notwithstanding these differences, the great fact of a future existence, which was one of the prominent doctrines of Christianity as preached by Paul, was *allowed* or believed by the Pharisees. It followed, that, although a leader of a *sect*, Paul had not so forsaken the truth, the Pharisees themselves being judges, as justly to deserve condemnation; for he still worshipped the God of his fathers, believed the testimony of Moses and the prophets, and hoped for the resurrection of the dead, even as they themselves did. ¶ *Both of the just and unjust*. That is, of all men indiscriminately. A difference of character, in the present life, would not affect the resurrection. All should be raised, whatever their former character had been. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the same distinction of character must exist to all eternity. Paul's opinion on this subject may be seen in 1 Cor. ch. xv.

16. *Herein*. In this faith, or in this state of mind. ¶ *Do I exercise myself*. It is my constant endeavor and purpose. ¶ *To have always a conscience, &c.* To perform my whole duty faithfully, so that my conscience shall not upbraid me for disobeying God or injuring men. This declaration of Paul should not be regarded as a vainglorious boast, but as a solemn protestation of innocence in respect to the charges against him. Instead of being seditious and a blasphemer, or contemner of God and his servant Moses, he declares it to be his constant wish and purpose to maintain an unspotted conscience in all his civil and religious relations. ¶ *Void of offence*. Inoffensive, not causing to stumble.

17. *After many years*. He had long been absent from Jerusalem. He had preserved a good conscience, and had

been a quiet and peaceable citizen, during his absence. He returned for a justifiable and commendable purpose, as he proceeds to show, in opposition to the third specification of the charge against him; namely, that he had profaned or desecrated the temple, ver. 6. ¶ *I came to bring alms, &c.* This was one principal object of his journey. He came also, at that particular time, to unite with the Jewish people in the solemn ceremonies of worship. See note on ver. 11. Coming, as he did, on such a benevolent mission, to relieve the distresses of the poor saints in Jerusalem, and to worship God with them in the temple, it was absurd to suppose that he would immediately attempt to profane the temple, and excite sedition among the people.

18. *Certain Jews from Asia*. Probably from Ephesus, or its vicinity, as they so readily recognized Trophimus. See Acts xxi. 27—29. ¶ *Purified in the temple*. Performing the ceremonies required for purification, according to the provisions of the Mosaic law, Acts xxi. 26, 27. ¶ *Neither with multitude, nor with tumult*. He had created no disturbance. He had not drawn a multitude together, for any purpose. He had entered the temple, with four others, that they might legally accomplish a vow, made according to the Mosaic law.

19. *Who ought to have been here, &c.* Those who found him in the temple, and who alone were competent to prove him guilty of disorderly conduct, were not produced as witnesses. There was no proof therefore of the charge, which he pronounced false, and he was entitled to an acquittal. The neglect of his accusers to produce witnesses evinced their consciousness of inability to maintain their allegation.

20. *Or else, &c.* There being no witnesses of the particular crime charged, the apostle, with that boldness and

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried, standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that way*, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief

confidence which nothing short of conscious innocence could inspire, called on the Jews who were present, to testify, if they could, to a single disorderly action or word of his, when he stood before the council. ¶ *Evil-doing*. Any violation of the law, by word or deed. ¶ *While I stood before the council*. See Acts xxiii. 1—10.

21. *Except it be for this one voice, &c.* Some unbelievers have pretended, that Paul here acknowledged that the course pursued by him, in presence of the council, was unjustifiable. A much more natural and reasonable interpretation is, that he uttered these words in irony; as if he had said, Let them testify concerning a single act of evil-doing on my part, unless, indeed, they account it a crime that I should have professed a firm faith in the resurrection of the dead. See note on Acts xxii. 6. This was the only thing he had said or done, before the council, which had even been the *occasion* of tumult: and if they regarded *that* as a crime, he desired them to say so openly. It must have been humiliating to his enemies, to confess that an uproar had been produced in their highest ecclesiastical tribunal, even endangering the life of Paul, by his simple declaration that he agreed with a large number of their own body in respect to the resurrection of the dead. But this was all that could be testified against him; and he rightly judged that his reference to the subject would seal their mouths in silence. ¶ *Touching*. Concerning, respecting.

22. *Having more perfect knowledge of that way*. This passage is obscure, and commentators are divided in opinion concerning its meaning. The interpretation by Doddridge is approved by Barnes and others, and seems not improbable:—“The words in the original are very ambiguous, and might be rendered, ‘that Felix, when he had heard these things, having been more

captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister, or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla,

accurately informed concerning this way of Christianity, and knowing it not to be so mischievous a thing as these accusers suggested, put them off.’ But I rather think, with Beza, Grotius, and others, that they are all the words of Felix, and take the meaning to be, ‘that he would take an opportunity of being more particularly informed of this sect, and of its aspect on the public tranquillity; and when Lysias should come and give him an account of what he had observed concerning it, as well as of the circumstances attending Paul’s apprehension, &c., he would determine the affair.’ Which answer was the more proper, as Paul did not deny that he was indeed a leading person among the Christians, which made a part of their accusation; and we soon after find that Felix sent for Paul to give him an account of his religion, ver. 24, and endeavored by this as well as other means to inform himself in it.” ¶ *When Lysias, &c.* The chief captain was supposed to know many facts in the case, necessary to its proper decision. The governor therefore delayed giving judgment, until his testimony could be had. ¶ *The uttermost, &c.* The whole matter in controversy.

23. *He commanded, &c.* He gave Paul every indulgence, consistent with his safe keeping; and thus manifested his belief that the charges against him were untrue. Why he did not fully discharge him, does not so distinctly appear. Some suppose he hoped to obtain a bribe, ver. 26, 27; and that he gave Paul’s friends free access to him, that they might give him money wherewith to purchase freedom.

24. *Drusilla*. A grand-daughter of Herod the Great, and sister to Agrippa, of whom Josephus gives this account:—Her brother had given her in marriage to Azizus, king of Emesa. But this marriage “was in no long time afterward dissolved upon the following occasion: While Felix was procurator

which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and an-

of Judea, he saw this Drusilla, and fell in love with her, for she did indeed exceed all other women in beauty; and he sent to her a person whose name was Simon, one of his friends; a Jew he was, and by birth a Cypriot, and one who pretended to be a magician, and endeavored to persuade her to forsake her present husband, and marry him. Accordingly she acted ill, and was prevailed upon to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix."—*Antiq. B. xx. ch. vii. § 1, 2.* She is said to have lost her life, at an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, during the reign of Titus. With this woman, Felix was living, in an adulterous connection. This may have induced Paul to insist on the duty of chastity, ver. 25. ¶ *Sent for Paul, &c.* Perhaps to obtain further information concerning the Christian faith or doctrine; perhaps to gratify the curiosity of Drusilla, who was a Jewess; perhaps also to make Paul feel his dependence, and to induce him to purchase his freedom with money, ver. 26.

25. *Reasoned.* Discoursed. Whatever the object of Felix may have been, in thus calling the apostle to speak in his presence, Paul did not omit the opportunity thus afforded, to advocate the principles of righteousness. Instead of flattering the governor's vanity or excusing his sinfulness, he effectually condemned both, by insisting on the necessity of the opposite virtues. ¶ *Righteousness.* Justice; rectitude of heart and conduct; a virtue in which Felix is represented to have been deficient. This was a profitable topic to urge upon the consideration of a governor, specially commissioned to administer justice. Very probably, Paul urged the duty of being upright and just, from the fact that God is righteous in all his ways. And the consideration of divine justice, in connection with his own unrighteousness, assisted in making Felix tremble. ¶ *Temperance.* The original word denotes the restraint of all passions and appetites. There is no evidence that

answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him:

Felix was *intemperate*, as that word is now generally understood; but he was unchaste, and it is generally allowed that *chastity* would more accurately express the apostle's special meaning here than *temperance*. ¶ *Judgment to come.* Literally, the judgment about to be, or the impending judgment; *ton krimatos tou mellontos* (τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος); or, as Haweis translates, to the same purpose, "the judgment which is ready to be revealed." He enforced the consideration that the *righteous* God would assuredly administer justice, and render to every man a just judgment according to his deeds, whether good or bad. No wonder that Felix trembled, if he believed the testimony; for his sins had been called to remembrance already, while Paul was discussing the subjects of righteousness and chastity. Some have fancied, but without the slightest intimation to that effect in the text, that the apostle referred to a judgment to be executed in the future life. He does not fix the time of the judgment at all, except so far as it is fixed by the qualification "about to be," which certainly does not indicate a far distant period. ¶ *Felix trembled.* Literally, Felix was fearful, or was terrified. Fear usually causes trembling; and probably such was its effect on Felix. ¶ *Go thy way, &c.* He remanded Paul to prison. ¶ *When I have a convenient season, &c.* It is generally represented, that this convenient season never arrived. And the case of Felix has long been cited, to illustrate the danger of being ruined by procrastination. Whether Felix received advantage by the preaching of Paul, we have no information; perhaps he did not; yet it is certain that he heard him again, more than once, ver. 26; and it is probable that he selected "convenient seasons" when he "commanded with him;" for "he sent for him."

26. *Hoped also that money should have been given him, &c.* As a bribe for releasing Paul from confinement. Felix was avaricious; and corruption

wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

## CHAPTER XXV.

**N**OW when Festus was come in to the province, after three

and fraud were then rife in public places. He manifestly considered Paul not guilty of crime; but he was willing to retain him in custody, that he might obtain money from him, or his friends, as the price of freedom. The indignant and bitingly sarcastic exclamation of Sterne is not wholly unjustifiable:—"And this was Felix! the great, the noble Felix! Felix the happy! the gallant Felix, who kept Drusilla! Could he do this? Base passion! what canst thou not make us do?" ¶ *Sent for him the oftener*, &c. He heard him frequently. The historian has not recorded the subject of those *communings*. It may have been a further explanation of the doctrines which Paul preached; or it may have been of a different character. It is buried in darkness.

27. *After two years*. Thus long was Paul's confinement at Cesarea. However wicked were the men who thus confined him, it may be regarded as a providential mercy that he should have such an opportunity to recruit his exhausted physical powers. ¶ *Porcius Festus*. Little is known of this person beyond what is here recorded, except that he remained governor or procurator of Judea until his death, during the reign of Nero. ¶ *Willing to shew the Jews a pleasure*. More simply, to please the Jews. Felix was perhaps conscious of his unpopularity; and sought, by this means, to conciliate the people. But he was disappointed; for they followed him to Rome, and accused him to the Emperor. He narrowly escaped condign punishment, by the intercession of influential friends. The time and manner of his death are not known.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1. *When Festus*, &c. See note on Acts xxiv. 27. ¶ *Into the province*.

days he ascended from Cesarea to Jerusalem.

2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

That is, Judea, which was then a Roman province. ¶ *After three days*, &c. The government was assumed by him at Cesarea, Acts xxiv. 27; and after remaining there three days he visited the capital of his province. ¶ *Ascended*. The Jews generally described a journey to Jerusalem, as ascending, or going up, and a journey from that place, as descending, or going down; partly in honor to the city, as the most renowned in all that region, and partly because it was situated on elevated ground.

2. *The high priest*. Josephus says that about the period when Felix was succeeded by Festus in the government of Judea "king Agrippa gave the high priesthood to Ishmael, who was the son of Fabi."—*Antiq. B. xx. ch. viii. § 8*. It is generally supposed, however, that Ananias was the person here mentioned by Luke; being called the high priest, even though another had been placed in the office, according to a common custom of the Jews. ¶ *Informed*, &c. The accession of a new governor, less thoroughly acquainted with their contentious and malicious spirit, probably encouraged the Jews to hope for the accomplishment of their murderous designs against Paul. They lost no time in attempting to prepossess the mind of the governor against him.

3. *Desired favor against him*. They represented, doubtless, that Felix had improperly delayed the course of justice, to their injury; and desired Festus now to execute judgment against Paul, for the honor of God and of their nation. Their scheme was artfully devised. Festus knew that Felix had been unpopular, and that he was to be followed to Rome by accusations. It was supposed he would wish to ingratiate himself with his new subjects; and this case was thus early presented, that he might seize upon it, as affording a favorable opportunity to secure the



4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought.

favor of the people. See ver. 9. ¶ *Send for him to Jerusalem*. Pretending a desire, that he might be brought for the purpose of a full investigation of the case, that Festus might have personal knowledge of his ill-deserts. ¶ *Laying wait, &c.* However much they might hope from Festus, they still had doubts and apprehensions. They renewed their former plot, Acts xxiii. 12—15, or rather, they adopted the plot which was formed and communicated to them, two years before, by a band of desperadoes. If they could persuade Festus to send for Paul, they would not trust further to his desire to please them, but would take the business into their own hands, and settle it effectually.

4. *But Festus answered, &c.* Whether he suspected some evil design, does not appear. But he judiciously determined to make the examination at Cesarea instead of Jerusalem. He assured them there should be no unnecessary delay. See ver. 16, for this answer, more at large.

5. *Which among you are able*. Generally interpreted to mean those who are best skilled in prosecutions, namely, men of ability, or those who can most conveniently attend the trial. The phrase, however, is susceptible of yet another interpretation, at least equally well suited to the connection: Let those who know anything against this man go with me to Cesarea, and there accuse him. In either case, he must be understood as assuring them that there should be a fair trial. This, however unsatisfactory, was all which they could reasonably ask. ¶ *If there be any wickedness, &c.* Literally, if there be any thing in this man. But the impli-

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove;

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cesar have I offended any thing at all.

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jeru-

salem of course is, any thing wrong or criminal.

6. *More than ten days*. Or, as Griesbach and other critics read, *not more than eight or ten days*. This better agrees with the declaration of Festus, ver. 4, that he should visit Cesarea *shortly*. ¶ *Sitting on the judgment-seat*. An elevated seat, sometimes called a tribunal, was occupied by judges formerly, even as now; and, on this occasion, Festus acted in his judicial capacity; in other words, he held a court for the trial of Paul.

7. *Grievous complaints*. Grave accusations of high crimes and misdemeanors. Probably the same charges were repeated, which were ineffectually urged on a former occasion, Acts xxiv. 5, 6. ¶ *Which they could not prove*. It was easy for them to accuse; they did not hesitate to accuse falsely. But, like many accusers in more recent times, they utterly failed in the proof,—a most important point, when a trial is had before an impartial and righteous tribunal. They had failed in like manner before. Acts xxiv. 13, 19.

8. *While he answered, &c.* His answer was substantially the same which is more fully recorded in Acts xxiv. 10—21. Hence it is probable that the “many and grievous complaints,” ver. 7, were of the same character as those which had been alleged by Tertullus.

9. *Willing to do the Jews a pleasure*. Desiring to please the Jews. They had rightly judged, that, as he was entering upon his new government, he would be desirous to conciliate the feelings of his subjects, and secure their good will, if possible. It seems he dared not condemn Paul, when no crime was proved

salem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but

against him, lest he himself should fall under the displeasure of the Roman government. But, being probably pressed by the Jews to grant their original request, he proposed to Paul that he should go to Jerusalem, for further trial. As an honest man and an upright judge, he should have discharged his prisoner. There are, however, some redeeming circumstances; he did not *require* Paul to go to Jerusalem, but only proposed it: he proposed to retain jurisdiction of the case, and to have the trial conducted *before him*, and not to turn Paul over to the tender mercies of the Jews; and he was probably ignorant of the intended assassination during the journey.

10. *I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat.* With firmness the apostle declined the proposal to be tried at Jerusalem, but asserted his rights and privileges as a Roman citizen. The Roman governor was the representative of the emperor, called by the general name of Cesar, as the Egyptian kings were called Ptolemy. He protested against any further ecclesiastical trial. Repeated attempts had been made to convict him of some offence against the Mosaic law: but all had signally failed. He would stand now on his civil rights, and consent to no further intermeddling by the priests and elders. ¶ *As thou very well knowest.* He appealed to Festus, that the result of the former trial must have convinced him that the charge was utterly unfounded. The original has a force which is not fully expressed in the translation, equivalent to, — You know better than I can tell you, or better than you choose to confess.

11. *If I be an offender, &c.* He admitted his accountability for any offence committed against the laws of the empire, and his readiness to submit to any penalty justly incurred. But he would not consent to put his life in

if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cesar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cesar? unto Cesar shalt thou go.

13 And after certain days, king

jeopardy, by going into the midst of his inveterate enemies in Jerusalem. Not only would he not voluntarily encounter this peril; he protested against it in the most effectual manner, by claiming his birthright as a Roman citizen, and appealing for judgment to the highest authority. ¶ *I appeal unto Cesar.* I appeal to the emperor. This privilege of appeal belonged to every citizen; and its effect was, to carry the case to Rome for final adjudication. Despairing of a fair trial and a righteous judgment in Judea, conscious of his innocence, and his ability to make it manifest before unprejudiced judges, and possibly moved somewhat by his ardent desire to preach the gospel in Rome, he made his solemn appeal, which Festus could not deny. He added, with becoming earnestness, that no man had a right to deliver him to the Jews, who had failed to do aught except to manifest their rancorous hostility and malice against him.

12. *Conferred with the council.* Those who were his counsellors in the administration of justice. This council has been shown by Lardner to have been Roman and not Jewish; and this is the general interpretation. It was customary for the governors of provinces to be assisted by the advice of a council, sometimes styled "assessors," and sometimes "captains." ¶ *Hast thou appealed unto Cesar?* Rather, as the ancient and many modern translators have rendered the passage, affirmatively, Thou hast appealed unto Cesar. ¶ *Unto Cesar shalt thou go.* He allowed the appeal, and was perhaps gratified thus to be freed from the embarrassing position in which he was placed; being desirous to administer justice on the one hand, and fearing to offend the Jews on the other.

13. *Agrippa.* Generally called Agrippa the Younger, son of Agrippa, whose death is recorded in Acts xii. 23, and

Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cesarea, to salute Festus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix :

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that

he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth ;

18 Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed :

19 But had certain questions

grandson of Herod the Great. By the emperor Claudius he was made king of Chalcis; which government was subsequently exchanged for that of Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, Batanæa, Paneas, and Abilene. To these Nero afterwards added a portion of Peræa and Galilee. While every thing tended to rebellion in Judea, Agrippa earnestly endeavored to preserve the public peace; but his exertions were unsuccessful; he indeed kept in check, but could not entirely suppress, the passions of the Jews, exasperated by the cruelties and insolence of their governors. They declared openly against the Romans, A.D. 66, and Agrippa was compelled to aid the Roman army, in taking Jerusalem. After the destruction of that city, he retired to Rome with his sister Bernice, with whom he had long lived in a very discreditable manner. He died, aged about seventy years, towards A.D. 90.—*Jos. Antiq. B. xix. ch. ix; xx. ch. vii., viii., ix.* ¶ *Bernice.* Sister to Agrippa; and as loose in her morals as her sister Drusilla, the mistress of Felix. Josephus asserts that she lived in incest with Agrippa.

14. *Festus declared Paul's cause, &c.* As Agrippa thoroughly understood the Jewish law and customs, Acts xxvi. 3, it was natural that Festus should desire his opinion concerning this embarrassing case. ¶ *In bonds.* Literally, a prisoner.

15. *Informed me.* See ver. 1—3. ¶ *To have judgment against him.* To have him condemned, as a malefactor deserving death.

16. *To whom I answered.* We have here the reason why Festus refused to grant the request of the Jews, ver. 4, 5.

¶ *It is not the manner of the Romans.*

The Roman jurisprudence was distinguished beyond that of other nations, for fairness and equity; and very much which is so highly valued at the present day owes its origin to that ancient system. Ancient authors have been cited, in proof that the language of the text is strictly according to the existing facts. Thus Appian (*Rom. Hist.*) says, "It is not their custom to condemn men before they have been heard," and Philo (*de Præsid. Rom.*) says, "By giving sentence in common, and hearing impartially both plaintiff and defendant, not thinking it right to condemn any person unheard, they decided as appeared to them to be just, without resentment or favor, but according to the merits of the case." Tacitus also (*Annal.*) says "a defendant is not to be prohibited from adducing all things by which his innocence may be established." ¶ *Have the accusers face to face.* One of the most important circumstances in the equitable administration of justice. No man should be condemned, without having an opportunity to confront his accuser, and the witnesses by whom the charge is sustained. It may be of the highest importance, that the motives and circumstances, under which they accuse or testify, should be known.

17. *When they were come, &c.* See ver. 6.

18. *None accusation, &c.* He expected that Paul was to be accused of some crime against the laws of the empire. But no such charge was presented, except the vague and unsupported charge of exciting sedition. The allegations had respect to difference of opinion on religious matters.

19. *Certain questions.* Points of dis

against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice,

pute; subjects of controversy. ¶ *Of their own superstition.* Rather, of their own religion. The same word occurs in Acts xvii. 22; see the note. That it is here used in a good, rather than a bad sense, may be concluded, because it was the common word applied by the heathen of whom Festus was one, to denote what they regarded as religion; and because Festus knew that Agrippa entertained at least an outward respect for the Jewish religion, and would not be likely to offend and insult him, by applying to it a reproachful epithet. ¶ *One Jesus, which was dead,* &c. More literally, one dead Jesus. Festus did not believe that Jesus had risen; nor did he suppose Agrippa believed it. In this contemptuous manner, therefore, he declared the controversy to be concerning a dead man, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20. *Because I doubted,* &c. "Or. Being in doubt with regard to an inquiry about him (or this matter), that is, because I was at a loss in what manner to make an inquiry into a thing of this nature."—*Pearce.* ¶ *I asked him,* &c. See ver. 9.

21. *To be reserved.* Or kept; that is, that all further proceedings in this case should be stayed, until it came before the emperor himself. ¶ *Hearing of Augustus.* Or the judgment of Augustus, the emperor, so called after the immediate successor of Julius Cæsar.

22. *I would also hear,* &c. Not for the purpose of a trial; for Paul had

with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain

appealed to Cæsar; and no inferior magistrate could interfere. But Agrippa had doubtless heard much of the new sect and its founder; and he had a curiosity, laudable enough for aught which appears to the contrary, to hear the doctrine explained by one of its most eminent advocates.

23. *With great pomp.* Exhibiting the splendor of royalty. ¶ *Place of hearing.* Probably the hall of judgment, or place appointed for public audience. ¶ *Chief captains.* Chiliarchs; commanders of thousands. It is not unlikely that the *council* of Festus, ver. 12, consisted of military officers, such as these. ¶ *Principal men,* &c. Perhaps civil officers; or the men of wealth, intelligence, and reputation, may be intended.

24. *Have dealt with me,* &c. Have urged me; have endeavored to persuade me. They have attempted, by various methods, to induce me to put him to death.

25. *Committed nothing,* &c. Though Festus says only that Paul was not convicted of a capital crime, or a crime punishable by death, he in effect acknowledges, ver. 26, that no crime whatever was proved against him. Paul's appeal to Cæsar, therefore, was occasioned by the improper delay of Festus in granting him a discharge. ¶ *To send him.* That is, to Rome, the residence of Cæsar.

26. *Of whom.* Concerning whose conduct, and in regard to the charges

thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

**T**HEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak

against him. ¶ *I have no certain thing.* He knew not how to state the subject of complaint. Paul was not proved guilty of any crime known to the Roman law; and he should have been discharged by Festus, according to his own account, and according to the opinion of Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 32. The real matter in controversy Festus did not understand, and he could not frame a satisfactory letter upon that subject. ¶ *My lord.* That is the emperor; this was one of his customary titles of respect and honor. ¶ *I might have somewhat to write.* Knowing that Agrippa was skilled in questions of this sort, Festus hoped to obtain from him some direction and advice how to describe the alleged offence.

27. *It seemeth to me unreasonable, &c.* Festus was conscious of the absurdity of sending a prisoner to Rome, for trial, without sending also a statement of the charge and the proof which had been exhibited against him. Especially was he embarrassed by the consideration that he himself had tried the prisoner, retained him in custody, and was now about to send him to a higher tribunal, and yet could not say that he was even suspected of any known crime. His desire "to do the Jews a pleasure," ver. 9, had proved a sore discomfort to himself. A straight-forward honesty and uprightness would have saved him this embarrassment.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1. Properly this chapter should not have been divided from the preceding; for it is a continuation of the same subject. ¶ *Thou art permitted to speak, &c.* Not required, but permitted.

for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

3 Especially, *because I know* thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

It should be remembered, that Paul was not on trial before Agrippa; for he had appealed to a higher tribunal; see note on Acts xxv. 22. ¶ *Stretched forth the hand.* A customary gesture of ancient orators, to intimate their intention to speak.

2. *I think myself happy, &c.* Heretofore, Paul had labored under serious disadvantages, when vindicating his cause before rulers. Heretofore, his judges had been a bigoted priesthood, embittered against him by what has been absurdly called a *religious hatred*, or heathen rulers, ignorant of the matters in controversy, and utterly incapable of appreciating his arguments. He was now to answer before Agrippa, who was thoroughly acquainted with the Mosaic law and customs, yet free from that hostility to Christianity which rankled in the hearts of the priests and elders. In congratulating himself upon this favorable circumstance, Paul necessarily complimented Agrippa. There was no sycophancy in this, however; it was but an open and honest statement of an undoubted fact. ¶ *I shall answer.* I shall defend myself against the aspersions of my enemies.

3. *Expert.* Skilled; well acquainted. See Acts xxiv. 10. ¶ *Customs.* Rites; ceremonies; religious observances. ¶ *Questions.* Subjects of controversy pertaining to the law; as between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and between other sects of the Jews. ¶ *Wherefore.* Because you are thus acquainted with the subject, and capable of perceiving the bearing and force of arguments on one side and the other. Heathen magistrates despised the law, and regarded all controversies concerning it with contempt; consequently

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews,

5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify,) that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

they could not lend a patient ear to arguments. Agrippa better understood the importance of the subject, and *therefore* Paul besought him to listen patiently.

4. *My manner of life.* My general conduct, and my religious principles as expressed in language or indicated by actions. ¶ *Which was at the first.* Or, from the beginning. Paul had dwelt in Jerusalem many years, during his youth and early manhood. He had not lived in obscurity; but the position he occupied afforded an opportunity to observe his true character.

5. *Which knew me.* Were well acquainted with me. ¶ *If they would testify.* If they would honestly tell the truth, they would confirm what I say. ¶ *The most straitest.* Or, as we should say, the straitest, or most strait. ¶ *Sect.* Party. The same original word which is translated *heresy*, Acts xxiv. 14. ¶ *I lived a Pharisee.* Not only believed the doctrines of the Pharisees (see note on Matt. iii. 7), but conformed to all their usages and customs, or reduced their opinions to practice. He seems to refer to his former purity of life and respect for the Mosaic institutions, in order to suggest the improbability of his having become a reviler and transgressor in more mature years. The maxim of the wise man was recognized in former times, even as now. Prov. xxii. 6. He had been carefully trained by Gamaliel, and had established his character for integrity. It was not likely that he would all at once abandon himself to iniquity.

6. *For the hope of the promise, &c.* Namely for the hope founded on the promise. Commentators have doubted whether Paul referred to the promise of a Messiah, or to the promise of a resurrection of the dead. The course of his argument rather indicates the former; at the same time, it is not to be overlooked, that, in Acts xxiii. 6, he urged that his hope for the resurrec-

6 And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

tion of the dead was the principal ground of accusation against him. The paraphrase by Doddridge represents him to have referred to both, in intimate connection:—"I stand in judgment, not for any crime that I have committed, but indeed for the hope of that promise of a resurrection to eternal life and happiness by means of the Messiah, which in time past was made by God unto our fathers. Concerning which hope, O king Agrippa, glorious and reasonable as it is, I may truly say I am now most unjustly and inconsistently accused by the Jews; for the doctrine I preach contains the fullest assurance and demonstration of a resurrection that ever was given to the world; and I am persuaded it is this that provokes those of my enemies who disbelieve it, to prosecute me with so much malice." In this interpretation, substantially, Barnes and some other recent commentators agree; and it is certainly worthy of consideration. Beyond question, in ver. 7, 8, the apostle puts the promise, or the hope founded on it, in such immediate proximity to the resurrection of the dead, that there can be little doubt that the one relates to the other. It is equally certain, that in ver. 22, 23, he puts the promise and the appearance of the Messiah in as close connection; and the same conclusion must follow. If we understand him to refer to both, as inseparably connected in the promise, the subject will be relieved from embarrassment. ¶ *Made of God.* Made by God, through his inspired servants.

7. *Unto which promise.* That is, to its fulfilment. ¶ *Twelve tribes.* The Israelites continued to be so called, though ten of the tribes had been carried into captivity, and so effectually dispersed, that their existence, as a separate and peculiar people, is to this day problematical. ¶ *Instantly.* Constantly. ¶ *Serving God.* Though little of the true spirit of religion re-

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

maintained among the Jews, they were very zealous and punctilious in the performance of its outward rites and ceremonies. Perhaps at no former period of their history had they been more strict in this respect. ¶ *Hope to come.* Hope to attain or realize.

8. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible, &c.* "The resurrection was the crowning proof of the Messiahship; and the apostle remonstrated with his hearers for thinking it incredible that that proof could be given, or had been given. It was limiting the power of God, and making human experience the test of the ways of Omnipotence." —*Livermore.* It will be remembered, that Agrippa was informed by Festus, that the controversy which had perplexed him was concerning "one dead Jesus, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." See note on Acts xxv. 19. To this declaration of Festus, the appeal in the text is pertinent. The subject is fully discussed in 1 Cor. ch. xv.

9. *I verily thought, &c.* I truly believed. I was as conscientious and as firmly fixed in my opposition to Jesus, as any of the Jews now are. See notes on Acts xxii. 3; xxiii. 1. Paul was not predisposed to discipleship. On the contrary, he was resolutely and even violently opposed to the believers. Nothing short of conclusive evidence could have convinced him that the "dead Jesus" was alive again; and this fact he very properly urged upon

12 Whereupon, as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *It is hard* for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto

the attention of his hearers. ¶ *Name of Jesus of Nazareth.* Himself, his cause, or his disciples.

10. *Which thing I also did, &c.* See Acts viii. 3; ix. 1. ¶ *When they were put to death, &c.* The martyrdom of only one disciple, Stephen, is recorded. Acts ch. vii. But it is said in general terms, that Paul "made havoc of the church," Acts viii. 3; by which it is clearly implied that other persons were put to death. In this sanguinary persecution, Paul was an active participant. See Acts vii. 58; viii. 1.

11. *I punished them oft.* See Acts xxii. 19. ¶ *Compelled them to blaspheme.* Or urged them, by the extremity of torture, to revile Jesus, by denouncing him as an impostor. It is not to be supposed that he wished them to blaspheme the God of their fathers, whom he worshipped. It was Jesus whom he hated and wished them to revile. ¶ *Exceedingly mad.* This frank confession was not overstrained, like that of some who abase themselves in hope of being exalted by others; but it was in strict accordance with facts. See Acts viii. 3; ix. 1. ¶ *Unto strange cities.* Foreign cities, of which Damascus was one.

12—15. See notes on Acts ix. 3—5; xxii. 6—8.

16. *But rise, &c.* See Acts ix. 6; xxii. 10. Some particulars are here recorded, which are not found in the former accounts. They are here rela-

thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light,

ted, for the purpose of more fully exhibiting the apostle's authority to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. It is not unusual for historians, when referring to the same transactions, in different places, to notice especially those particulars which relate most nearly to the principal subject in hand; nor do such differences impair the credit of historians, unless they be contradictory and irreconcilable. ¶ *Witness.* By being permitted to see the risen and glorified Jesus, he became as competent a *witness* of his resurrection as the original Twelve. See Acts i. 22. He was also a witness, like them, of all that was revealed to him by the divine Spirit. ¶ *In the which I will appear, &c.* That is, which I will hereafter communicate or make known to you. Paul grew in knowledge, as well as in grace. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

17. *From the people.* Namely, from the Jews. The promise of deliverance implied that he should be exposed to danger. The danger he had met, and the promise had been fulfilled, in his protection when in utmost peril. ¶ *Unto whom now I send thee.* It was not a voluntary act of Paul, to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles; for he had entertained towards them the inveterate prejudices, and even hatred, which distinguished the strictest sect among the Jews, ver. 5. He was sent by a power which he felt to be irresistible; and he was not refractory or disobedient, ver. 19, but cheerfully obeyed the command.

18. *To open their eyes.* To enlighten them; to communicate knowledge to them. See note on Matt. iv. 16. ¶ *The power of Satan, &c.* "That is the kingdom of evil, of which Satan is represented as the head or ruler. See Col. i. 12—14, for an illustration, in different language, of the same ideas contained in this verse. All must con-

and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem,

fess that the object of Christ's coming, which was elevated heaven-high above all others, was to save men from sin, from darkness, and error; to give them light, life, forgiveness, and a bright and beautiful inheritance among the blest; in one word, to make them better, and wiser, and to lead them up to happiness, heaven, God; and that the great instrument was faith in him, as is stated at the end of this verse. Why need it ever be asked, 'What is Christianity?' when the answer is written in so many places in the New Testament, in such luminous words."—*Liv-ermore.* See note on Matt. i. 21.

¶ *Forgiveness of sins.* A blotting out of transgressions, so that they shall no more be mentioned or remembered. A reinstatement of men in the position occupied before transgression. See note on Matt. vi. 14, 15.

19. *I was not disobedient.* Paul neither persisted in unbelief nor declined the duty imposed upon him. He believed a heavenly voice had addressed him, and placed implicit confidence in the truth communicated. He believed a divine command had been given him, and his whole subsequent history demonstrates how nobly and gloriously he yielded obedience. ¶ *The heavenly vision.* Referring both to what he saw and what he heard, when the light, exceeding the brightness of the sun, indicated the presence of a heavenly visitant, ver. 13—18.

20. *Showed first, &c.* In obedience to the divine command he had preached the gospel both to Jews and Gentiles. His whole life, from that time, had been devoted to the accomplishment of this great work. For this, the Jews were enraged against him, ver. 21. If he was to be condemned for this, so be it; but he knew, and he reiterated the fact, that he had obeyed a divine command, in doing that which had so high



and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this

ly excited their indignation. ¶ *Repent.* See note on Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *Do works meet for repentance.* Suited to repentance, or consistent with repentance. In other words, let your repentance be demonstrated by a corresponding change of conduct. See note on Matt. iii. 8.

21. *For these causes.* Because I professed faith in that same Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, as the true Messiah, and proclaimed his gospel and offered its blessings to the Gentiles, whom they despise and hate. ¶ *Caught me, &c.* Apprehended me; seized me; made me a prisoner. See Acts xxi. 27—31. ¶ *Went about.* Attempted.

22. *Having, therefore, obtained help of God.* Having been preserved, in the midst of all danger. He had several times been in imminent peril of his life; and though his remarkable deliverances had been wrought by human instrumentality, he referred his preservation directly to that God, who suffereth not a sparrow to fall without his notice. ¶ *Witnessing.* Testifying; bearing testimony, according to the direction given him, ver. 16. ¶ *Both to small and great.* To all classes of men; the poor and rich, the humble and exalted, from the helpless cripple at Lystra, (Acts xiv. 8), to the king on his throne, armed with the power and dignified with the pomp of royalty. All were regarded by him as included in his commission to preach Jesus and the resurrection; and he spake with equal freedom to all. He did not disdain to instruct the weak and the ignorant; and as little did he fear to proclaim the same truth to the Grecian philosophers on Mars Hill, the Sanhedrim in Jerusalem, or the representative of the majesty of Rome. He knew in whom he trusted, and he doubted not the final conquest of truth over error, of grace and holiness over sin.

¶ *Saying none other things, &c.* Pro-

claiming no doctrine contrary to the ancient predictions and promises, but announcing their fulfilment. He exhibited more fully and distinctly what they shadowed forth darkly; but he taught nothing inconsistent with the "oracles of God." Rom. iii. 2. ¶ *Should come.* Should come to pass, or be accomplished.

23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

23. *That Christ should suffer.* That the Messiah predicted by the prophets should be put to death. See Luke xxiv. 25—27. One of the principal obstacles to the acknowledgement of Jesus by the Jews, as the Messiah, was, that he appeared in humble form and was crucified, when they expected to see a powerful Prince, who should establish a temporal dominion over all the earth. The inveteracy of this prejudice and the extreme difficulty attending its removal, are illustrated in the history of his disciples. See note on Luke xxiv. 21. Paul here asserts, what his Master had long before declared and demonstrated, that the character, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus furnished an exact fulfilment of the predictions, according to their true import. Far from repudiating the authority of Moses and the prophets, he was the more strongly confirmed in his reverence for them, by the accomplishment of what they had foretold. And the opposition of the Jews against Jesus and his doctrine was attributable to their misunderstanding or ignorance of those scriptures which they professed to believe. ¶ *Should be the first, &c.* "It does not mean that he should be the first in the order of time, that should rise, but first in eminence, the most distinguished, the chief, the head of those who should rise from the dead."—*Barnes.* This interpretation yields a good sense. Or we may understand the apostle to mean that Jesus was the first who rose to immortal life. Others, it is true, had been pre-

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad,

viously reënimated; but Jesus was the first who became clothed with immortality and incorruption. ¶ *Should show light, &c.* See note on Matt. iv. 16.

24. *Festus said, &c.* The heathen governor had no faith in the prophets, but regarded with contempt the Jewish religion and all controversies concerning it. He was amazed at Paul's earnestness and zeal, in a matter which he considered of so little importance. Perhaps also he regarded the story of the *vision*, as an evidence of hallucination, or insanity. Altogether, he thought the apostle was delirious, and openly declared his opinion; endeavoring at the same time, to avoid increasing his mental excitement, by attributing his alienation of mind to his close application to study, and intense devotion to the mysteries of theology. He could not conceive that a sane man should be so much excited, and willing even to peril his life, in a case which seemed to him so unimportant. Thousands of well-informed minds and purified hearts have pronounced a more accurate judgment, and have decided that Festus was the more insane of the two.

25. *I am not mad.* Paul promptly repelled the imputation of insanity. Yet he did so with mildness and courtesy, addressing the governor by the respectful title which belonged to his office. ¶ *Words of truth and soberness.* "*Truth* here stands opposed to delusion, imposture, and fraud. *Soberness* stands opposed to madness, or derangement, and denotes sanity of mind."—*Barnes*. For the truth of the facts he had stated, he appealed to Agrippa; there was no deception in regard to the prophecies or their fulfillment. The coherence of his argument sufficiently denoted the free exercise of his intellectual powers. His perfect self-possession and calmness, under the imputation of insanity, indicated the same fact; for it is well known that scarcely any thing so suddenly and violently excites a madman to frenzy, as an intimation that he is not perfectly sane.

26. *For the king knoweth, &c.* The

most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely. For I am persuaded

skill and tact here manifested by Paul, has not escaped the notice of commentators. Instead of calling the attention of Festus to the character of his argument, or proceeding to sustain it by further reasons, he turned at once to the king, in whom he knew Festus reposed confidence, whose sanity at the least he would not call in question, and appealed to him as a witness whether he were mad, or of a sound mind. Agrippa had been educated as a Jew, and was familiar with the law, customs, and history of that people. ¶ *These things.* The principal subjects of which the apostle had spoken; namely, the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah, the life, character, death, and, at least, the alleged resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, whom Paul affirmed to be that Messiah; the former opposition of Paul to the disciples, his violent persecution of them, the remarkable change which had been wrought in his opinions and conduct, and his unintermitted labor, during many years, for the establishment of Christianity, both in Judea and among the Gentiles. None of these things were "done in a corner," or in obscurity or secrecy, but all were matters of public notoriety; insomuch that any person must have heard of them, who had even a tolerable acquaintance with Jewish affairs. Of these things *not done in a corner*, Trapp says, in his quaint manner, "Neither Christ's passion, nor Paul's conversion. Rome rang of the former, and it was seriously debated in the senate-house, whether Christ should not be received into the number of the gods. And as for Paul's conversion, it was far and near talked of. For as a bell cannot be turned from one side to the other but it will make a sound, and report its own motion, so will the turning of a sinner from evil to good, such a sinner especially; his conversion was universally known; like the trumpet of God, it filled the whole country." ¶ *I speak freely.* I am the more free to state these facts, because the king knows they are true; and he, at least, will not

that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both

allege that the statements which I have made are the ravings of a madman.

27. *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?* The Jewish prophets, who had predicted the advent of a Messiah, and described his character. ¶ *I know that thou believest.* No Jew could be regarded as an unbeliever. Belief in Moses and the prophets was the birth-right of the nation. Perhaps also Agrippa was known to have professed his belief, and to have conformed to the requisitions of the law. However this be, the apostle very courteously complimented the king, as a known believer, and at the same time effectually prevented him from returning any qualified answer, which should give the slightest advantage to an adversary. "History contains few more masterly efforts of eloquence than this address of Paul before Agrippa; and even Longinus, a heathen, enrols, in his *Treatise on Sublimity*, the name of the apostle in the catalogue of celebrated Grecian orators."—*Livermore*.

28. *Almost thou persuadest me, &c.* So forcible were the arguments of Paul, so intense his earnestness, and so searching his appeal to the conscience, that Agrippa could not disguise his emotion, but confessed himself almost convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah,—the distinguishing doctrine of Christians. It does not appear that he ever attained assurance of faith. But he was favorably impressed, and it is not unlikely that his representation of the case to the Roman government was of much service to Paul. He doubted not the apostle's innocence of crime, ver. 32, and would have liberated him at once, had he not already appealed to Cæsar, which removed his case beyond the jurisdiction of any subordinate officer.

almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Fes-

29. *I would to God.* I vehemently desire; I pray God. ¶ *All that hear me.* His benevolent desires were not concentrated on Agrippa alone; but in the true spirit of the doctrine he professed, he ardently desired the spiritual good of all his hearers, rulers and people, Jews and Gentiles. ¶ *Such as I am.* Believers in Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, and cheered by the hope, through faith in him, of a glorious resurrection to immortal life, and holiness, and happiness. ¶ *Except these bonds.* Or, chains. This allusion to his own trials and persecutions was exceedingly impressive. He was willing to endure bonds, and even death if need be, in effectually accomplishing the objects of his ministry; but while he desired that others might share his joys, he desired also that they should be free from his trials. Thus ends one of the most remarkable speeches on record; displaying at once the honesty and sincerity, the intellectual energy, and the warm-hearted, christian benevolence, of the apostle.

30. *The king rose up, &c.* The assembly was dismissed by the king, who perhaps dared not longer trust himself within the power of such irresistible eloquence. Happier for him, had he remained until his scruples were removed, and himself altogether persuaded to become a Christian.

31. *Nothing worthy of death, &c.* He had so plainly demonstrated his innocence, that the rulers were fully convinced of the fact, and acknowledged it. The united testimony of the chief captain Lysias, of Festus, and of Agrippa, pronounces Paul free from any act of disobedience to the laws of his country.

32. *Might have been set at liberty, &c.* Festus hoped to obtain advice from

tus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cesar.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

AND when it was determined, that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia, *one*

Agrippa, how to frame the charge against Paul. Acts xxv. 26, 27. In reply, Agrippa declares his conviction that *no charge* can be sustained. Accordingly, it seems no charge was sent. See Acts xxviii. 21. The conduct of the officer, who conducted Paul to Rome, indicates that he regarded his prisoner as one more sinned against than sinning. Acts xxvii. 1—3, 43.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1. *When it was determined, &c.* When the time of departure was fixed. ¶ *That we should sail.* This form of expression, which continues through the remainder of the narrative, indicates that the historian accompanied Paul from Cesarea to Rome. ¶ *Certain other prisoners.* It was not unusual for prisoners to be thus sent to Rome from the distant provinces, for trial, on appeal or otherwise. ¶ *Centurion of Augustus' band.* A commander of one hundred, in the division of the Roman army distinguished as Augustus' band. See note on Acts x. 1. The Augustine band or cohort is mentioned by Suetonius, in his life of Nero.

2. *Adramyttium.* "A maritime town of Mysia, in Asia Minor, opposite to the island of Lesbos, and an Athenian colony. It is now called Adramyti."—*Calmet.* ¶ *We launched.* We set sail. See note on Luke v. 4. It was probably a coasting vessel, the owners of which designed to traffic at various ports on the coast. It appears from ver. 6, that this vessel was not expected to go so far as Rome. ¶ *Aristarchus.* See Acts xix. 29; xx. 4. He is called by the apostle a "fellow-prisoner,"

Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.

Col. iv. 10, and a "fellow-laborer," Philem. ver. 24. He accompanied Paul to Rome, probably not as a prisoner, but, like Luke, as a friend and companion. Among all his trials, Paul had some steadfast friends to sympathize with him and comfort him.

3. *Sidon.* See note on Matt. xi. 21. ¶ *Entreated.* Treated; an antiquated use of the word. ¶ *Gave him liberty, &c.* The centurion doubtless had directions from Festus and Agrippa not to confine Paul rigorously, as criminal, but rather to treat him with the kindness and courtesy due to one who voluntarily undertook the journey for the more full establishment of his innocence. See note on Acts xxvi. 32. Otherwise, he would not have ventured to hazard an escape of Paul from his custody. See note on Acts xvi. 27. ¶ *His friends.* Paul had previously visited Sidon, and had secured friends there as in all other places where he had labored. ¶ *To refresh himself.* To enjoy their kindness and hospitality.

4. *Under Cyprus.* See note on Acts iv. 36. They sailed near the coast of the island, to avoid the force of the wind, which was "contrary," or unfavorable to an easy accomplishment of their voyage.

5. *Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia.* The north-easterly portion of the Mediterranean, lying between the island of Cyprus and the provinces of Asia Minor here named. See notes on Acts vi. 9; xiii. 13. ¶ *Myra, a city of Lycia.* Lycia is "a province in the southwest of Asia Minor, having Phrygia and Pisidia on the north, the Mediterranean on the south, Pamphylia on the east, and Caria on the west."—*Calmet.* Of this prov.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone:

8 And hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called, The Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was inee, it is said that Myra was the capital city.

6. *A ship of Alexandria.* The city here named was in Egypt. See note on Acts vi. 9. The ship was laden with wheat, ver. 38, vast quantities of which were exported yearly to Rome and elsewhere. It must have been a ship of considerable size, as it carried two hundred and seventy-six persons, ver. 37, besides its freight of merchandise.

7. *Cnidus.* "A city standing on a promontory of the same name, in that part of the province of Caria which was called Doris, a little northwest from Rhodes. It was remarkable for the worship of Venus, and for possessing the celebrated statue of this goddess, made by the famous artist Praxiteles."—*Calmet.* ¶ *Under Crete* Near the shore of the island. See note on Acts ii. 11. ¶ *Over against Salmone.* Near to the easterly point of the island, on which Salmone was situated.

8. *Hardly passing it.* Passing the point with much difficulty and danger of wreck. Being unable, on account of "contrary winds," to pursue their course between the island and the main land, they doubled or passed round the cape at its easterly end, and sailed along the southerly coast of the island. ¶ *The Fair Havens.* A harbor, or perhaps rather a roadstead, on the southeasterly side of the island, which afforded safe anchorage. ¶ *Lasea.* This place is not mentioned by ancient writers. It seems to have been near the south-easterly extremity of Crete.

9. *Much time was spent.* They had hoped to reach Italy before the dangerous season arrived, but they had been delayed by head-winds, and had here absolutely anchored, it would seem, and

spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was waited for a favorable change. ¶ *Because the fast was now already past.*

The fast, here mentioned merely to indicate the season of the year, is supposed to be the great Jewish fast of atonement or expiation, which occurred about the first of October. This is the season when the equinoctial storms are generally expected; and such storms were more dangerous to the ancient mariners than to the modern, since the recent improvements in navigation. ¶ *Paul admonished them.* Gave them warning of approaching danger.

10. *I perceive.* This was his judgment, guided by his previous experience of the danger attending such voyages. There is no necessity to suppose he was divinely inspired to give this admonition; indeed, the contrary is more probable; for, though the vessel and cargo were lost, there was no loss of life. ¶ *Hurt.* Damage; destruction. The voyage, he supposed, would jeopardize both life and property.

21. *The master.* Or, Captain of the vessel. ¶ *Owner of the ship.* Probably a different person from the master. Being the owner of the ship, and perhaps also of the cargo, and thus being so deeply interested in the success of the voyage, it was both natural and proper that he should be consulted. As the master and owner concurred in opinion, the military commander relied on their judgment rather than on the opinion of Paul, who was not a practical mariner, and consented to proceed with the prisoners in his custody. Hence he seems to have had a voice in the decision of the question.

12. *The haven.* The Fair Haven, ver. 8. ¶ *Was not commodious, &c.* Was not a safe or convenient place. ¶ *Phenice.* This port in the island of Crete

not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west.*

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after there arose

should not be confounded with Phœnicia, a country on the main land, bordering on the easterly shore of the Mediterranean. ¶ *Lieth toward the south-west.* Greek, toward Lybia; a country in Africa, lying south-westerly from Crete. ¶ *And north-west.* It is supposed the harbor was sheltered by a small island; and that it had two openings, one toward the south-west and one toward the north-west. In such a haven, a vessel might lie with safety.

13. *Obtained their purpose.* The wind had been westerly, and opposed to their progress. When it changed into the south, though not precisely such as they desired, they supposed they might accomplish their purpose of sailing westerly from the Fair Havens to Phenice. ¶ *Close by Crete.* They kept very near the shore of the island. This course was deemed most safe and prudent by ancient navigators; but the open sea is now sought, in seasons of danger, except when a secure harbor can be attained.

14. *Euroclydon.* "The Greek name for the north-east wind, very dangerous at sea, of the nature of a whirlwind, which falls of a sudden upon ships. The same wind is now called a Levant-er."—*Ency. Rel. Knowl.* Schleusner says, that the precise meaning of this word is not known; but he thinks the most probable conjecture is, that it indicates a wind blowing from the east, raising tremendous waves, and exciting a furious commotion in the sea.

15. *The ship was caught.* That is, by the wind, which came suddenly, like a hurricane. ¶ *Could not bear up, &c.* Could not resist the power of the wind; became unmanageable. ¶ *We let her drive.* We suffered the vessel to be driven by the wind, without fur-

against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and fearing lest they

ther effort to withstand its force. In a storm, it is judged safest to keep a ship as nearly head to the wind as possible; and this may generally be effected, by a judicious disposition of the sails. But when the violence of the storm is very excessive, this position becomes impracticable, and safety consists in turning the ship, so that the head shall be directly from the wind, and thus *scudding* before it, *under bare poles*; see ver. 17. The most dangerous of all positions, in a tempest, is to present the side of a vessel to the wind.

16. *Under a certain island.* Very near it; with the hope that it might somewhat break the violence of the wind. Hitherto, notwithstanding they were *driven*, they retained some power of guiding the vessel, not only by the helm, or rudder, but by some portion of the sails, ver. 17. ¶ *Claudia.* A small island, south-westerly from Crete. ¶ *Much work.* Great difficulty; severe labor. ¶ *To come by the boat.* To secure the boat; to obtain it. The boat had probably been *towed* at the stern of the vessel, and was in danger of being lost. To a mariner, the preservation of the ship's boats is of the highest importance; as, in case of wreck or other disaster, these furnish almost the only means of escape.

17. *When they had taken up, &c.* When they had raised the boat from the water, and secured it on the deck of the ship. ¶ *They used helps.* They used such means as they had, to prevent the utter wreck of their vessel; one of which is immediately specified. ¶ *Undergirding the ship.* This process consisted in passing a cable around the ship's *hull*, and securing it tightly, to prevent the planks from being torn off, or the timbers wrenched asunder, by the violence of the waves. "This

should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;

19 And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence,

method has been used even in modern times. An instance of this kind is mentioned in Lord Anson's voyage round the world. Speaking of a Spanish man of war, in a storm: They were obliged to throw overboard all their upper-deck guns; and take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening."—*Clarke*. ¶ *Quicksands*. Some commentators understand any shoals or sand-banks to be intended. Others suppose special reference is had to one or the other of two very dangerous shoals, on the northern coast of Africa, called the *Syrtis Major* and *Syrtis Minor*; these were vast beds of sand, continually changing their places by the action of the waves, so that their precise situation could not be anticipated. ¶ *Strake sail*. Lowered, or furled up, the only sail which had been left standing, ver. 16. Some understand that they cut away the mast; but the former interpretation seems more natural, and more consistent with ver. 40.

18. *Lightened the ship*. By casting overboard a portion of the cargo; perhaps so much as was stowed on the deck. See ver. 38.

19. *Tackling of the ship*. So much of the spare rigging as was not indispensably necessary to their safety. The anchors were preserved, ver. 29, to be used in the last extremity, to avert shipwreck.

20. *Neither sun nor stars, &c.* Before the invention of the mariner's compass, no means existed, except the heavenly bodies, by which sailors could know their position or in what direction to steer, when out of sight of land. When, as in this instance, the sun and stars

Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, *Sirs*, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cesar: and

were not seen for many days, all accurate reckoning must be lost; and a degree of despair was the natural consequence.

21. *After long abstinence*. It is not probable that they totally abstained from food during this long period, ver. 33; but the violence of the storm had prevented the ordinary preparation of food, and rendered them disinclined to eat. ¶ *Gained this harm and loss*. *Received*, or *suffered*, would more accurately express the idea. What they endured was the reward or the natural result of their temerity.

22. *No loss of any man's life*. If they credited this prediction, their hearts must have been cheered. Probably, however, few of the number had any faith in his prophetic powers. ¶ *But of the ship*. This rendered the prediction the more remarkable. It is very unusual that so large a vessel should be utterly wrecked, and, of nearly three hundred persons on board, not a single person lost.

23. *Stood by me*. Appeared to me. ¶ *The angel of God*. A heavenly messenger. ¶ *Whose I am*. To whom I belong; whom I recognize as my creator, preserver, and benefactor. Perhaps Paul was more particular in thus referring to the only true God, in contradistinction to the gods of the heathen, so that when the promised deliverance should come, his companions in danger might be led to regard him as superior to their supposed deities.

24. *Thou must be brought, &c.* Thou shalt assuredly reach Rome; a sufficiently positive promise that he should not perish in this storm. ¶ *God hath given thee, &c.* All who are in the

lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had

ship shall likewise be saved from death. The form of the promise indicates that the presence of Paul was a safeguard to the others, and that they should be preserved for his sake. This principle in the divine government is illustrated in Gen. xviii. 16—33. As the wickedness of the wicked is sometimes destructive to the righteous, so also are the wicked sometimes preserved on account of the righteousness of the saints.

25. *I believe God.* Whatever he promises, he will assuredly perform; therefore, be of good cheer.

26. *Howbeit.* Nevertheless. ¶ *A certain island.* Malta, ver. 44. Thus circumstantial was his prediction, which, when compared with its fulfilment, bears evident marks of inspiration.

27. *The fourteenth night.* Reckoning from the time when the storm commenced. ¶ *In Adria.* That is, in the Adriatic Sea. This name is now confined to the gulf or arm of the Mediterranean Sea, extending northerly between Italy and Dalmatia. But it was formerly used to designate a much larger portion of the Mediterranean, lying between Italy, Greece, and Africa. In this larger portion Malta was situated. See Acts xxviii. 1. ¶ *Shipmen.* Sailors. ¶ *Deemed,* &c. Judged. The appearance of the water, the perfume of the air, and many other circumstances, indicate to practised mariners the vicinity of the land, even when unable to see it.

28. *Sounded.* Measured the depth of the water, by a line, to the end of which a heavy piece of lead was attached. ¶ *Twenty fathoms.* One hundred and twenty feet; a fathom being six feet. ¶ *Fifteen fathoms.* Ninety

gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, Except these

feet. The rapid diminution of depth indicated their proximity to land, and led them to fear they should immediately strike the rocks.

29. *Cast four anchors.* To stay the progress of the ship, and keep it stationary until morning. ¶ *Out of the stern.* Anchors are now attached to the head or bow of ships; but formerly the custom was different; and it is said the old custom still prevails with the Egyptians.

30. *Under color,* &c. Under pretence. Pretending a necessity to carry another anchor to windward, for the security of the ship, they designed to escape on shore, and leave their companions to perish. ¶ *Foreship.* Generally called the bow.

31. *The centurion.* Perhaps he had some control over the ship, as partly engaged on the business of the government. See note on ver. 11. Or we may understand that Paul addressed the centurion, not because he had legal control of the ship, but because he commanded a physical force sufficient to overpower the mariners, and to prevent their desertion. It is to be observed, that the desertion was prevented, not by command of the master, but by the prompt act of the soldiers, at the command, doubtless, of the centurion. ¶ *Except these abide,* &c. The soldiers and passengers were unqualified to manage a ship. It was important, therefore, that the sailors should remain. For however certain it was that the lives of all on board should be preserved, ver. 22, it was equally certain that proper means should be used for the accomplishment of that object. One of those means, and an indispen-



abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

sable one, was that the mariners should remain in the vessel and assist in guiding it nearer to the shore.

32. *Cut off the ropes, &c.* The boat had been lowered into the water by ropes, in the usual manner; and it was still suspended, or attached to the vessel, by those ropes. Before the mariners had an opportunity to enter the boat, the soldiers cut the ropes, and it drifted away from the vessel. This effectually prevented the contemplated desertion.

33. *The day was coming on.* The light was beginning to appear. ¶ *To take meat.* To eat food. All kinds of food were indiscriminately called meat. See note on Matt. iii. 4. ¶ *Having taken nothing.* Having taken no regular meals. See note on ver. 21. It seems impossible that they should have literally eaten nothing during fourteen days. This form of expression is sometimes used by historians to denote the irregularity and infrequency of partaking food, rather than entire abstinence from it. "Appian speaks of an army which, for twenty days together, took neither food nor sleep; by which he must mean, they never made full meals, nor slept whole nights together. The same interpretation must be given to this phrase."—*Doddridge*.

34. *This is for your health.* Their long anxiety, fatigue, loss of sleep, and comparative abstinence from food, had doubtless debilitated them. And now that they were about to use their utmost exertions, in a final effort for self-preservation, the apostle exhorted them to partake of food, which would refresh their exhausted bodies, and prepare them for their arduous task. ¶ *There*

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

*shall not a hair fall, &c.* The assurance of preservation was repeated for their encouragement. This may be understood to imply not merely that no life should be lost, but also that no material harm should befall any person then on board the ship.

35. *Gave thanks to God.* It was the general custom of the Jews, when partaking of food, to offer thanks to God. See note on Matt. xiv. 19. The propriety and duty of thus recognizing God, as the author and bestower of all blessings, had been enforced by the uniform practice of our Lord. Paul did not hesitate to perform this religious duty, even though surrounded by heathen soldiers and mariners, who neither worshipped the true God, nor believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not ashamed of the gospel, nor desirous to conceal from others his faith and his gratitude.

36. *Good cheer.* They were encouraged and animated by the confident assurances of the apostle; they partook of the food, and prepared to make yet one more effort, with good hope of success.

37. *Two hundred three score and sixteen souls.* Two hundred and seventy-six; a large number to embark on board a merchant vessel. But Josephus relates a voyage of himself from Judea to Rome, with a much larger number; during which he was wrecked in this same sea. "As our ship was drowned in the Adriatic sea, we that were in it, being about six hundred in number," &c.—*Life*, § 3.

38. *They lightened the ship, &c.* Namely, by casting overboard the cargo of wheat. The ship, thus relieved of

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship

its burden, would sink less deeply in the water, and might safely pass over rocks, on which it would otherwise have stranded; and accordingly they hoped to reach a point nearer the land, before grounding.

39. *They knew not the land.* Malta was out of the usual course from Egypt to Rome, and they had perhaps never before seen it. As the sun and stars had long been obscured, they had lost their reckoning, and knew not to what part of the sea they had been driven. See note on ver. 20. ¶ *A certain creek with a shore.* Or a haven or bay, with an accessible landing-place. This seems to be indicated by its having a *shore*, as distinguished from rocky bluffs. ¶ *Were minded.* Were willing or desirous.

40. *Taken up the anchors, &c.* "Rather, *had cut* the cables of the *anchors, they left them, the anchors, in the sea.*"—*Pearce.* The passage is so rendered in the margin of the English Bible. See ver. 29. ¶ *Loosed the rudder-bands.* The helm, by which the rudder was governed, had been lashed, or confined to a fixed position; it was now made free, that it might be used in guiding the vessel into the creek. ¶ *Hoised up the mainsail.* In order to drive the vessel as near as possible to the shore, they again spread a sail, which had been previously furled, ver. 17.

41. *Falling.* Being driven. ¶ *Place where two seas met.* Literally, a place of a double sea. Where two currents strike each other diagonally, a sand-bank or bar is naturally formed by the action of the water. Such was probably the place here indicated. ¶ *The fore part stuck fast, &c.* The natural consequence of being forcibly

aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that they which could swim, should cast *themselves* first *into the sea*, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards,

driven upon a sand-bar. The forward part or head of the vessel would become firmly imbedded in the sand and would be *immovable*. ¶ *The hinder part was broken, &c.* A vessel, unless very thoroughly built, would soon go to pieces, under the circumstances here described. By this breaking up of the vessel, many pieces of plank and timber became disengaged, to which the crew and passengers clung for safety, ver. 44.

42. *And the soldiers' counsel was, &c.* A Roman guard was held accountable, by the military law, even to the peril of life, for the safe-keeping of prisoners. See note on Acts xvi. 27. The proposal of the soldiers, barbarous as it seems, was probably prompted by a desire of self-preservation, rather than by any ill-feeling toward the prisoners, or even hardness of heart.

43. *Willing to save Paul.* The conduct of the apostle, while on board, had won the esteem of the centurion; and, moreover, it is probable he had been directed to treat this prisoner with peculiar care and courtesy, ver. 3. ¶ *Kept them from their purpose.* He spared all the prisoners, through an unwillingness to destroy Paul. It is oftentimes of the highest advantage, to be embarked in a common cause with a good man; of which this case furnishes a striking illustration. ¶ *Could swim, &c.* By thus disposing of a part of the number, a better opportunity was afforded to the others to avail themselves of the broken parts of the vessel; and those who first reached the shore might assist those who followed, in their efforts to effect a landing.

44. *And the rest.* Those who could not swim; these floated, by the help of the planks and timbers, and were driven

and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

AND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for

on shore. ¶ *They escaped all safe to land.* Thus was the prediction of Paul accomplished, ver. 22, 34; for not only was there no loss of life, but no material harm or injury was suffered by any one. They escaped, and *safely* too, to the shore. This remarkable preservation, considered in connexion with the language of Paul, is generally regarded as miraculous. It was certainly an astonishing display of divine power and mercy, on behalf of Paul and his companions.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. *Melita.* An island in the Mediterranean Sea, now called Malta, about sixty miles in circumference, situated about sixty miles from Sicily. Its name is supposed to have been derived from the vast quantity of honey produced there. It was for many years in possession of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, sometimes called Hospitaliers, but is now under the government of England. It is said to have been settled by a colony from Carthage; and hence the inhabitants were termed barbarians by Paul and his companions. ver. 4. There is another island of similar name, *Meleda*, in the Adriatic Gulf, which some have supposed to be the place of Paul's shipwreck. But the names of the places visited on the subsequent voyage to Italy clearly indicate Malta, and not Meleda, as the place here mentioned; and with this conclusion the voice of antiquity fully harmonizes.

2. *Barbarous people.* The Greeks were accustomed to call all foreigners *barbarians*, Rom. 1, 14, as the Jews styled foreigners *Gentiles*, without respect to their degree of mental or moral improvement. The inhabitants of this island manifested much kindness to the shipwrecked company, and thus proved

they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer,

themselves not to be barbarians in the technical sense in which that word is now generally used. ¶ *The present rain and cold.* The storm still continued; and, as it was then October, those who had been so thoroughly drenched must have suffered also with the cold.

3. *Gathered a bundle of sticks.* For the fire. Here, as elsewhere, Paul manifested a disposition to be as little burdensome as possible; and his own hands ministered to his necessities. Acts xx. 34. There are those, who, from pride or laziness, are fond of having their wants supplied by others, no matter at how much inconvenience. Paul was not one of this class. Though fatigued and chilled, he cheerfully contributed his assistance for the common comfort of the company. ¶ *Viper.* See note on Matt. iii. 7. This poisonous reptile was doubtless in the bundle of sticks, benumbed by the cold, and apparently lifeless. ¶ *Out of the heat.* Or out of the fire; having been restored to activity by the heat, and escaping from the fire to avoid destruction. ¶ *Fastened on his hand.* Bit him; struck his fangs so deeply into the flesh as to remain suspended, when Paul raised his hand.

4. *Beast.* Rather animal. The word properly enough signifies any kind of animal, and was frequently applied to serpents. ¶ *Vengeance.* The word *Dikē* (δική), is the Greek name of the goddess of Justice, sometimes also called *Nemesis*. The ignorant and uncivilized inhabitants of Malta, like many in later times, regarded every calamity as an indication and the punishment of crime. When, therefore, they saw that Paul had been attacked by the viper, they imagined he had been guilty of some enormous crime; and that the avenging goddess had now inflicted the proper penalty. Doubtless

whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit, they looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius;

much human suffering is the direct result of sinfulness. But we are too short-sighted, to pronounce with accuracy, in all cases, or even generally, how far the calamities and afflictions, which befall mankind, are designed as punishments, or otherwise. See notes on Luke xiii. 2; Acts v. 11.

5. *Felt no harm.* See Mark xvi. 18. It is not expressly asserted that Paul was wounded by the viper. But the obvious purport of the narrative is, that he was wounded and miraculously preserved from injury.

6. *He should have swollen, &c.* The poison of the viper is exceedingly virulent and rapid in its effects. The wounded part becomes violently inflamed, attended as is usual by swelling, and frequently the unfortunate victim suddenly falls dead. ¶ *Changed their minds.* From one form of superstition to another. Perceiving that the usual effects did not ensue, they at once supposed Paul must be exempt from the common infirmities of humanity. ¶ *Said that he was a god.* The heathens supposed the gods sometimes visited the earth in human form. And when they witnessed any incomprehensible occurrence, they attributed it to the presence of a divinity. See Acts xiv. 11.

7. *In the same quarters.* In the same region; or the same part of the island. ¶ *Possessions.* Property; the residence seems intended. ¶ *The chief man.* Literally, the first man. He was probably the governor; and, from his name, a Roman. ¶ *Courteously.* The Roman officers, Julius and Publius, were kind and polite in their treatment of Paul. It has been sup-

posed that a portion of this civility may be attributed to the recommendation of Agrippa. See note on Acts xxvii. 3.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody-flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

11 And after three months we

posed that a portion of this civility may be attributed to the recommendation of Agrippa. See note on Acts xxvii. 3.

8. *Bloody-flux.* Literally, *dysentery*. The Greek term, in an English dress, is still used as the name of the disease, whose nature is indicated in the common translation. ¶ *Healed him.* See Mark xvi. 18. Though Luke, a physician, might have relieved the disease, by medicine, Paul preferred to use his miraculous power, in token of gratitude for kindness received, and for its moral effect.

9. *So when this was done, &c.* The attention of the people was excited, and they gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to be healed. See Acts v. 12—16; xix. 11. 12. By this means, Paul had access to their hearts; and, from his general character, we may be certain he did not suffer such an opportunity to pass unimproved.

10. *With many honors.* Probably honorable gifts or presents are here intended. And the kindness of the people did not abate; for they manifested their respect for Paul and his companions, by furnishing them, at their departure, with the provisions necessary for their voyage.

11. *After three months.* Their own vessel was wrecked; and it would seem that none departed for Italy within this period, in which they could conveniently take passage. ¶ *A ship of Alexandria.* See note on Acts vi. 9. Probably freighted with grain, like that which had been lost. See Acts xxvii. 6. ¶ *Whose sign.* It was customary to place at the prow, or forward part of vessels, the statue, or figure, or other

departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew and we came the next day to Puteoli:

representation, of some divinity. The custom still continues, so far as to place a statue or bust in the same position, which is styled the "figure-head." ¶ *Castor and Pollux.* Semi-divinities of the heathen. They were supposed to be twin-sons of Jupiter and Leda, and were regarded as the special protectors of mariners. According to the mythology, they were translated, after death, to the heavens, and became a constellation called Gemini, or The Twins.

12. *Syracuse.* This was the capital of Sicily, situated on its eastern coast. It was celebrated as the birth-place of Archimedes, the renowned mathematician. This island was in the direct course from Malta to Italy, but far out of the regular track from Meleda. See note on ver. 1.

13 *Fetched a compass.* Coasted around. Probably some projecting headland hindered a straight course, and rendered it necessary to sail in a circuit. ¶ *Rhegium.* "A city of Italy, on the coast near the southwest extremity of Italy, opposite to Messina in Sicily. It is now called Reggio."—*Calmet.* ¶ *Puteoli.* The wells, or the place of wells. "Now Pozzuoli, a city in the Campania of Naples, on the northern side of the bay, eight miles northwest from that city."—*Calmet.* It was celebrated for its baths and wells, from which the name seems to have been derived. Here ended the tempestuous voyage of Paul; the remainder of his journey to Rome being on the land.

14 *We found brethren.* That is, Christians. It is not known with certainty by whom the gospel had been preached in Italy; but it is not an improbable conjecture that Jewish Christians, scattered abroad by persecutions, had found their way thither, and proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ.

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-forum, and The Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

15. *From thence.* Namely from Rome, ver. 14. The Roman Christians manifested the highest respect and veneration for Paul, by travelling so far to meet him, especially as he came in the character of a prisoner. It is supposed his epistle to their church was sent about five years previously to this time; and it is by no means astonishing, that they should have an ardent desire to see the face of this chosen servant of God, and should be ready to pay him all proper honor. ¶ *Appii Forum.* "A city, or market-town, founded by Appius Claudius, on the great road which he constructed from Rome to Capua. Some authors suppose it to have occupied the site of the present hamlet of Le Case Nuove. But it is more probably to be found in the present Casarillo di Santa Maria, situated fifty-six miles from Rome, in the borders of the Pontine marshes."—*Calmet.* ¶ *The Three Taverns.* The place so called was twenty miles, according to some authors, or as others state, not more than six or eight miles, northerly from Appii Forum, on the Appian Way leading to Rome. It was probably a noted place for refreshment, for the accommodation of travellers. From the manner in which the circumstance is recorded, it seems probable that a portion of the brethren from Rome remained at the Three Taverns, while others went forward to Appii Forum, to greet the apostle and conduct him thither. ¶ *He thanked God, &c.* He had long desired to see the Roman Christians, Rom. i. 9—11. He rejoiced that he was not to enter the city altogether in disgrace; but that his brethren were ready to manifest their confidence in his integrity, by attending him on his way, ministering to his physical wants, and cheering his spirit by their sympathy, advice, and encouragement. He was not forgetful

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together. And when they were come together, he

said unto them, *Men and brethren*, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans:

18 Who when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

of the Author of all blessings, and he thanked God for this display of his goodness.

16. *Rome*. At that time the most magnificent city on the earth, often styled, from its power and glory, the "Mistress of the World." It had passed its culminating point of prosperity, however, and luxury and corruption were performing their appropriate work. It tottered long before it fell, but destruction came at last; and for many centuries, Rome has been admired for what it *was* rather than for what it *is*. See note on Acts ii. 10. ¶ *Captain of the guard*. "The prefect or captain of the prætorian band. It was customary for prisoners, who were brought to Rome, to be delivered to this officer, who had the charge of the state prisoners, as appears from the instance of Agrippa who was taken into custody by Macro, the prætorian prefect that succeeded Sejanus (see Josephus), and from Trajan's order to Pliny, when two were in commission. The person, who now held this office, was the noted Burrhus Afranius; but both before and after him it was held by two."—*Doddridge*. ¶ *To dwell by himself*, &c. In his own hired house, ver. 30. That he was not confined with notorious offenders and common felons, was a distinguishing mark of favor to Paul, and affords evidence that he was not regarded as a malefactor by the officers of government. It has been supposed that the favorable representations of Agrippa were of great service to him, in this respect. See note on Acts xxvi. 32; xxvii. 3. ¶ *With a soldier that kept him*. Being sent to Rome as a prisoner, he could not be set at liberty until he was acquitted. But the mildest confinement then in use was granted to him. He was committed to the charge of a single soldier, to whom he was probably bound, in the customary man-

ner, by a chain secured to his right arm and to the left arm of the soldier, ver. 20. In this condition, he might receive his friends at home, or he might go abroad in the city, enjoying the largest degree of liberty compatible with the fact that he was a prisoner.

17. *Paul called the chief of the Jews*, &c. Those of most influence among them. In seeking this conference at the earliest practicable moment, it is probable the apostle had two objects. He had reason to suppose the Jews of Judea had communicated to their brethren at Rome grievous charges against him; and he desired to remove from their minds any unfavorable impressions, thus made, by declaring his innocence, and the true position in which he stood, ver. 17—19. Moreover he desired to explain to them the true nature and grounds of Christianity, that they might become partakers of its hopes and its blessings, ver. 20. Of this last named object he never lost sight. ¶ *Against the people or customs*, &c. He had neither violated the civil privileges of his countrymen, nor spoken reproachfully of their religious rites and observances; of both which crimes he had been falsely accused. See Acts xxi. 28; xxiv. 5, 6. ¶ *Was I delivered*, &c. Namely, by the Jews, Acts xxi. 27—33. He had been seized by an infuriated mob, who would have destroyed his life, had he not been rescued by the Romans. He was therefore substantially, though not in form, delivered as a prisoner by his countrymen, who subsequently sought to procure his destruction by accusing him of sedition and other high crimes and misdemeanors, when arraigned before the Roman tribunal.

18. *When they had examined me*. See Acts xxiv. 10—27; xxv. 6—12. ¶ *Would have let me go*. See Acts xxv. 14—27; xxvi. 30—32. ¶ *No*

19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

*cause of death.* No offence deserving death.

19. *The Jews spake against it.* They endeavored to prevent the Roman officers from liberating Paul, by reiterating their charges of sedition, and blasphemy, and general misconduct. ¶ *I was constrained to appeal,* &c. A regard to self preservation induced him to make this appeal. Having failed to procure his conviction at Cæsarea, the Jews desired his removal to Jerusalem; see notes on Acts xxv. 9, 10. Unwilling to be further subjected to their persecutions and to the hazard of assassination, he was compelled to adopt the alternative of appealing to Cæsar, which at once placed him beyond their reach. ¶ *Not that I had aught,* &c. He might have accused them of many grave offences and indignities against a Roman citizen, had he felt disposed to do so. But he had no such desire. His meaning here is, that he appealed, not for the purpose of injuring his countrymen, but only for his own preservation.

20. *For the hope of Israel.* See notes on Acts xxiii. 6; xxvi. 6. Considered by itself, the "hope of Israel" might be here understood to refer exclusively to the Messiah; but, when the former use of the same or similar language by Paul is taken in connexion with his language here, it would seem that he comprehended the resurrection of the dead with the advent of the Messiah, in the "hope of Israel." Indeed, these two subjects were very intimately connected in his mind; and he regarded the one as proof of the other; insomuch that "Jesus and the resurrection," Acts xvii. 18, rather than either separately, formed the theme of his discourses. See 1 Cor. ch. xv. ¶ *I am bound with this chain.* See note on ver. 16. The meaning is, I am here a prisoner, on account of my preaching concerning "the hope of Israel."

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee, what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

21. *We neither received letters,* &c. It would seem, that, having failed of success before Lysias, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, in their own country, where they were best able to turn aside the course of justice by unrighteous means, the Jews abandoned the further persecution of Paul. Perhaps they were satisfied with his temporary banishment from Judea; but more probably they feared lest they should be brought into difficulty as malicious prosecutors, should they appear against him at the tribunal of Cæsar. ¶ *Neither any of the brethren,* &c. That is, of the Jews. Probably none came with Paul, except those who were well disposed towards him. And those who had previously visited the city had not spoken against him.

22. *But we desire,* &c. They had heard of the new doctrine which Paul preached. Indeed there were then many Christians in Rome. They had heard the fame of Paul, as one of the most powerful advocates of Christianity; and they very naturally desired to hear it explained by one so thoroughly acquainted with the whole system, especially as he declared it to be the substance of things hoped for by the Jews. ¶ *What thou thinkest.* What your opinion or belief is. We desire to know what is the true nature and character of the doctrine which you believe and preach. ¶ *This sect.* Division, class; or, as we now say, denomination. The word is not necessarily used in a reproachful sense. See Acts xxvi. 5. ¶ *Spoken against.* Reproached. The Jews reproached the gospel and vilified its defenders, because they could not endure that the Gentiles should be accounted joint heirs with them of heavenly blessings. The Gentiles despised it, as an idle tale. It was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," 1 Cor. i. 23; and they unitedly spake con-

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging: to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost

temptuously of it. For reasons, not altogether dissimilar, the genuine doctrines of the gospel, and their defenders, have suffered reproach from their adversaries, in more recent times.

23. *Appointed him a day.* Fixed a time when they would assemble, and hear from him the explanation which they desired. ¶ *Into his lodging.* Probably to "his own hired house," ver. 30. ¶ *Expounded.* Explained the great principles of Christianity. ¶ *Testified.* Gave witness to the truth, or proved it, by arguments chiefly drawn from their own scriptures. ¶ *Persuading them, &c.* See notes on Acts xvii. 2, 3. He endeavored to convince them that Jesus was truly the Messiah, concerning whom Moses and the prophets wrote, and for whose advent the Jewish nation had long hoped, almost with impatience. Such was his general course of argument with the Jews. He did not ask them to repudiate their holy writings, but only to understand them aright, and to behold in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, a fulfilment of the ancient predictions uttered by men speaking "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 21. ¶ *From morning till evening.* He spared no exertion to make them understand the doctrine, and see and feel the evidence of its truth. And they manifested an unusually patient and teachable disposition, for Jews, to listen for a whole day to his arguments and persuasions.

24. *Some believed, &c.* As usual, some rejected the truth, being blinded to its reasonableness and conformity to the divine oracles, by their inveterate

by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto

prejudices. Yet Paul's labor was not altogether in vain. Some believed and embraced the gospel of grace; and his heart was made glad by this fruit of his labor. His highest joy was occasioned by the consciousness that God had enabled him to communicate to others the blessedness resulting from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and conformity to his spirit.

25. *Agreed not, &c.* It would seem that some manifested their belief and others their unbelief, ver. 24, while they continued with Paul, and perhaps discussed the matter somewhat in his presence. ¶ *Spoken one word.* Called their attention to one important prophecy, applicable to their condition. He perceived the disposition of many to reject his testimony; and he solemnly warned them, in the language of their favorite prophet, that they were about to cast away a blessing of the highest importance; and that what they rejected would be gladly received by the Gentiles. ¶ *Well spake, &c.* Spake truly; the description here given of the Jewish character remains true as when it was uttered. ¶ *The Holy Ghost.* Though the words were uttered or written by the prophet, they were inspired by the divine Spirit; they should therefore be regarded as a testimony from heaven. ¶ *Esaias.* The Greek form of the Hebrew Isaiah.

26, 27. *Saying, &c.* The place quoted is Isaiah vi. 9. 10. See notes on Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

28. *Therefore.* As much as to say, since you thus reject the gospel, I shall devote myself even more exclusively to its promulgation among the Gentiles,



you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole

years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

who will receive it with a more ready mind. ¶ *Salvation of God.* The salvation revealed in the gospel; the salvation of men by divine grace, through Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. 1 John iv. 14. See notes on Luke iii. 6; Acts xiii. 26. ¶ *Unto the Gentiles.* See notes on Acts xiii. 46—48; xviii. 6. To the preaching of this Gospel to the Gentiles, Paul was specially appointed. Acts ix. 15; xiii. 2; xxvi. 16—18. And most faithfully and successfully did he perform the work committed to his charge. He fought a good fight, kept the faith, and received the reward of well-doing. 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. ¶ *They will hear it.* Will believe it, embrace it. To this day, the truth of this prediction is manifest. Though the Jews, as a people, persist in their rejection of the gospel, millions among the Gentiles have embraced it, cherished it in life, and clung to it in the hour of death as an anchor of hope.

29. *Great reasoning*, &c. Much discussion. They debated the matter among themselves, whether the new doctrine were consistent with the oracles of God, to which Paul appealed in proof of its truth, ver. 23. This verse is not found in some ancient MSS., and is regarded as spurious by Griesbach and many other critics.

30. *Paul dwelt two whole years*, &c. Probably in custody of the single soldier, ver. 16. Whether his trial, mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17, was at any time during this period, is not known. The form of the expression implies that he was liberated at the end of two years; and such is the opinion expressed by ancient writers. ¶ *His own hired house.* A house which he was permitted to hire for his exclusive occupation. It is not unlikely that the Roman Christians contributed a part or the whole of the expense. ¶ *Received all*, &c. It is implied that he could not go elsewhere to preach the word; but here he freely communicated the truth to all inquirers.

31. *Preaching the kingdom of God.* Preaching the gospel; making known the nature of that new dispensation of grace, frequently styled the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of God, or the reign of God in the hearts of men. See note on Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *Confidence.* See note on Acts iv. 13, where the same word is translated "boldness." ¶ *No man forbidding him.* His liberty, in this respect, was not restrained. Though a prisoner among the heathen, and prohibited from prosecuting the work of the apostleship in the ordinary manner, he had full liberty to preach the everlasting gospel, and to testify the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, to all who visited him. Here, also, it is generally believed, he wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, to Philemon, the second to Timothy, and perhaps others. To the last moment of his recorded history, he remained diligent in the labor committed to his charge; and neither persecution, nor distress, nor stripes, nor imprisonment, induced him to remit his exertions for the spiritual benefit of the human family.

¶ The history closes, at this point, with some degree of abruptness. It has been supposed that Luke wrote it, during this residence in Rome, and died before Paul; otherwise, it is presumed he would have recorded the subsequent labors and martyrdom of the great apostle to the Gentiles. But however much we may regret the lack of an authentic history of these and other events connected with the establishment of Christianity in the heart of the Roman Empire, we should not overlook the peculiar fitness of the close of this history. It ends while Paul is speaking, while he is proclaiming the grace of the gospel. And his voice has not yet ceased to vibrate in the hearts of believers; for "he, being dead, yet speaketh." Heb. xi. 4.









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